EXCLUSIVE: FROGDESIGN FZ750

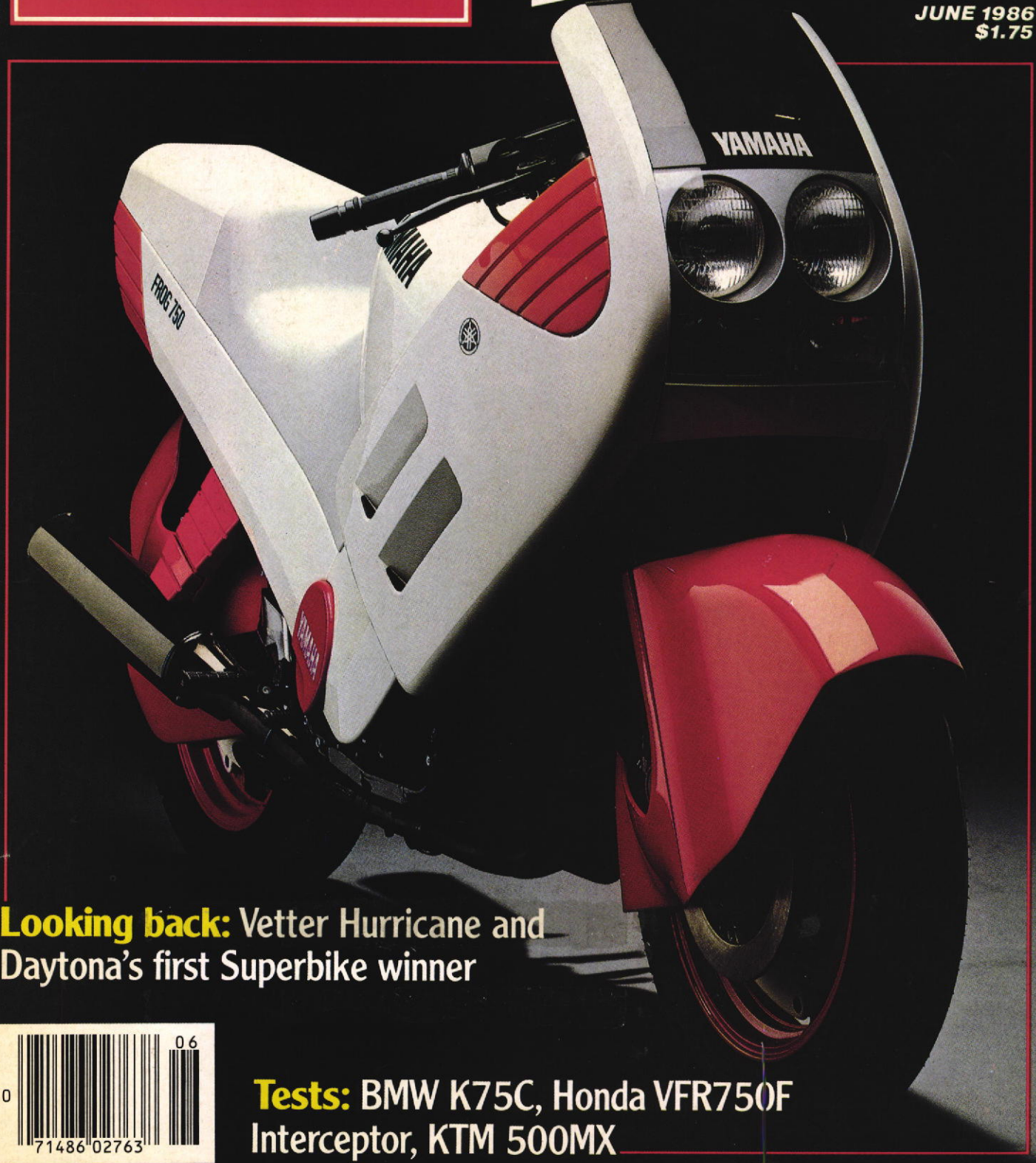
CYCLE GUIDE

CYCLE GUIDE

02763

IS THIS YAMAHA'S 1988 FZ?

JUNE 1986
$1.75



Looking back: Vetter Hurricane and Daytona's first Superbike winner

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Tests: BMW K75C, Honda VFR750F Interceptor, KTM 500MX

The Fazer. It doesn't fall into a category. It creates one.

If you've ever wondered why so many motorcycles are so much alike, we'll tell you. There's no real secret to it.

It's simply that most manufacturers make bikes to fit into categories so clearly defined, that one guys' machine probably won't be much different from the next guys'.

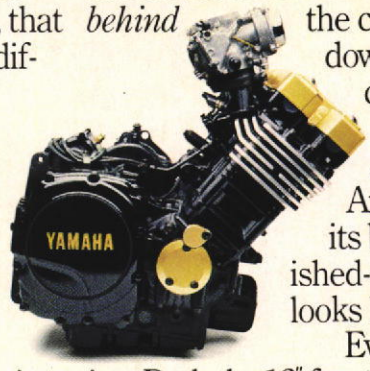
Unless it's a Yamaha Fazer. Because instead of designing our Fazer as yet another "category" bike, we designed it to create a category of its own.

How well did we succeed? Well enough to have *Cycle News* call it "...the start of a new generation of...motorcycles."

The heart of the Fazer is its Genesis engine, a 697cc liquid-cooled in-line DOHC four incorporating the world's first 5-valve design. And along with it, a 45° cylinder layout, downdraft carburetors and enough horsepower to scare the fairing off a super sport bike. While still being tractable enough to cruise around town.

Yet while power is nice, you have to be able to get it to the ground. So we build the Fazer with a box-section, wide-cradle steel frame, 38mm air-assisted front forks, and nitrogen-charged rear struts. Which, combined with triple disc brakes and a highly efficient chain drive, means the Yamaha Fazer will outhandle just about anything this side of Daytona.

But if it's easy to describe the way a Fazer performs, it's not so easy to describe the way it looks. Styling it like other bikes obviously wasn't one of our criteria. The fuel tank, for instance, doesn't sit in its traditional spot. It sits directly *behind* the carburetors and extends down to the engine. Why? Because a lower tank means a lower center of gravity. And hence, better handling. And the engine itself, with its black crankcases and polished-aluminum everything else, looks like high-tech sculpture.



Even the wheels are arresting. Both the 16" front wheel and massive 15" rear wheel are slotted aluminum discs. More like something off a Top Fuel dragster.

And that's the point. The Fazer was never intended to be like other motorcycles.

The Fazer was intended to be like... a Fazer.

YAMAHA
We make the difference.™

12-month limited warranty. Warranty terms are limited. See your Yamaha dealer for details. Specifications are subject to change without notice. Rear view mirror(s) standard equipment. Always wear a helmet and eye protection. This model sold in California is equipped with evaporative emission control device. Yamaha and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation encourage you to ride safely and respect fellow riders and the environment. For further information regarding the MSF rider course please call 1-800-447-4700.

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QUOTE: "To get that horsepower, we had to do *something*." —Pg. 64

ON THE COVER: Yamaha's FZ750 sheds its tail in the metamorphosis from long-legged sportbike to wide-eyed peek at the future. Leap to page 20 and see how frogdesign made Yamaha's pool of designers green with envy.

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YOU'LL NEVER HA

To demonstrate just how impressive the new Cavalcade LXE is, participating Suzuki dealers want to give you a test ride. Free.

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The LXE offers everything you've come to expect from our Standard and LX model Cavalcades, plus a long list of new features.

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Other amenities include new rear mounted stereo speakers and a multi-adjustable headrest for the co-rider, as well as a see-through map pocket and a handy coin box/cassette holder for the rider.

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Included with every 1986 Cavalcade is a free enrollment in Suzuki's Cavalcade Security Service Program, a nationwide dealer network that gives Cavalcade owners on-the-road priority service.

Be safe. Always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective riding apparel. For riding courses call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-(800)-447-4700.

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Things like a muscular 1360cc liquid-cooled V-4 engine. Or a computer-controlled Auto Leveling System that pneumatically adjusts the suspension to match the load.

Multi-adjustable backrest and floorboards for the co-rider.

The unique co-rider headrest is adjustable for both height and tilt angle for maximum comfort.

A sophisticated AM/FM stereo cassette system with independent co-rider controls.

Or an advanced electronic cruise control system.

Everything's right there, ready for the open highway.

But the only way to appreciate all this is to experience the Cavalcade LXE for yourself.

Which is why participating Suzuki dealers are now offering free demo rides. And while we could go on and on about the new Cavalcade LXE, we don't want to give away everything before your demo ride.

So until then, it looks as though you'll just have to wing it.

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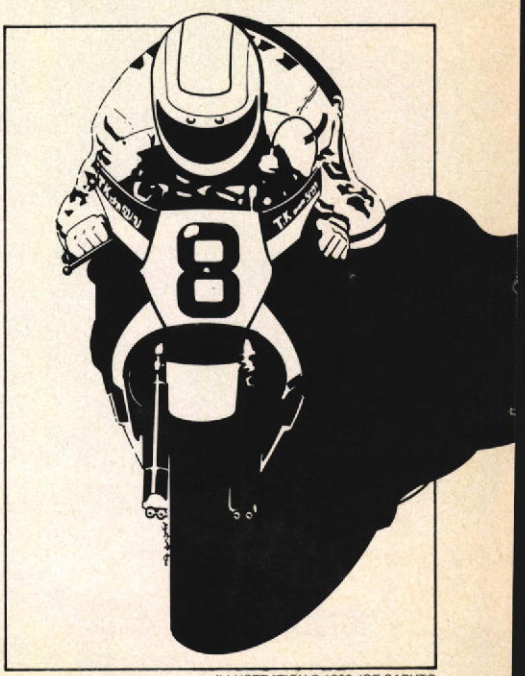

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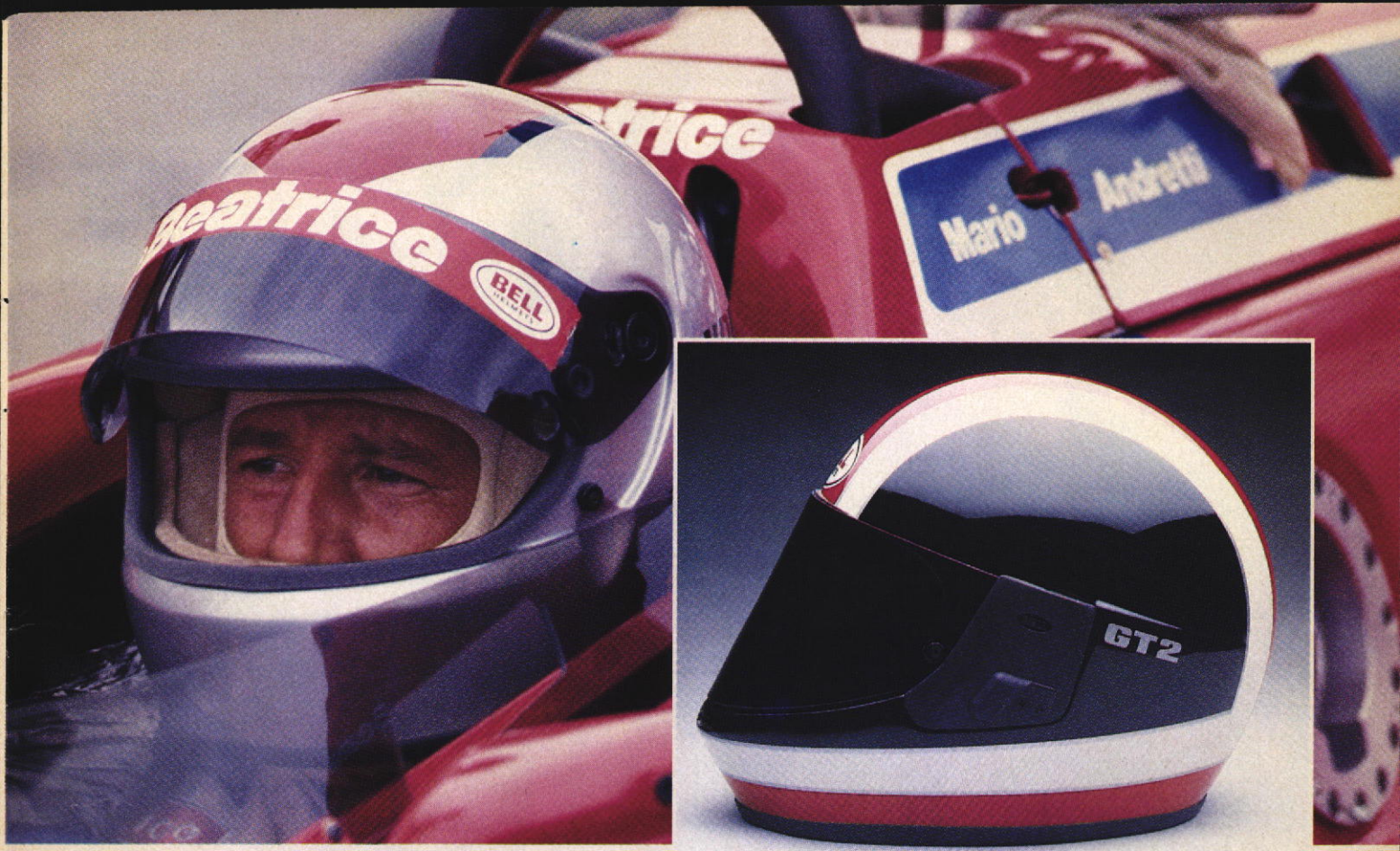


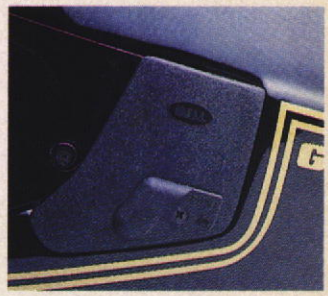
"I helped develop the new GT2, because wearing a Bell is as important to me on the street as it is on the track." Mario Andretti

"Both motorcycles and race cars are fun and important parts of my life. But I don't take unnecessary chances. Whether I'm riding my superbike or going 220 MPH in an Indy Racer, I use only quality safety equipment to keep myself safe and alert. So when Bell asked me to help develop the GT2, a street motorcycle helmet similar to my Bell XFM 2 auto racing helmet, I welcomed the chance. And I'm really pleased by the result. The GT2 is very quiet, comfortable and has excellent ventilation.

And I think the colors and graphics are great for today's hot new street-bikes!"

At Bell, we're as proud as Mario Andretti of the New GT2. Mario's help was a very important contribution to the success of this helmet. He even took the time to test the shell shape in his Beatrice Lola race car at the GM wind tunnel.

Look closely at the GT2 and you'll see Bell quality and technology everywhere. From its clean, wind-cutting shape to its comfortable interior, it's designed with the serious motorcycle enthusiast in mind. The fiberglass shell is finished with stylish colors and graphics to complement today's high tech machines, and the scratch-resistant push-button face shield provides good visibility and convenience. Up front, adjustable vents enhance air circulation and reduce fogging. And a new soft fabric chin cover helps make the GT2 one of the quietest helmets available.



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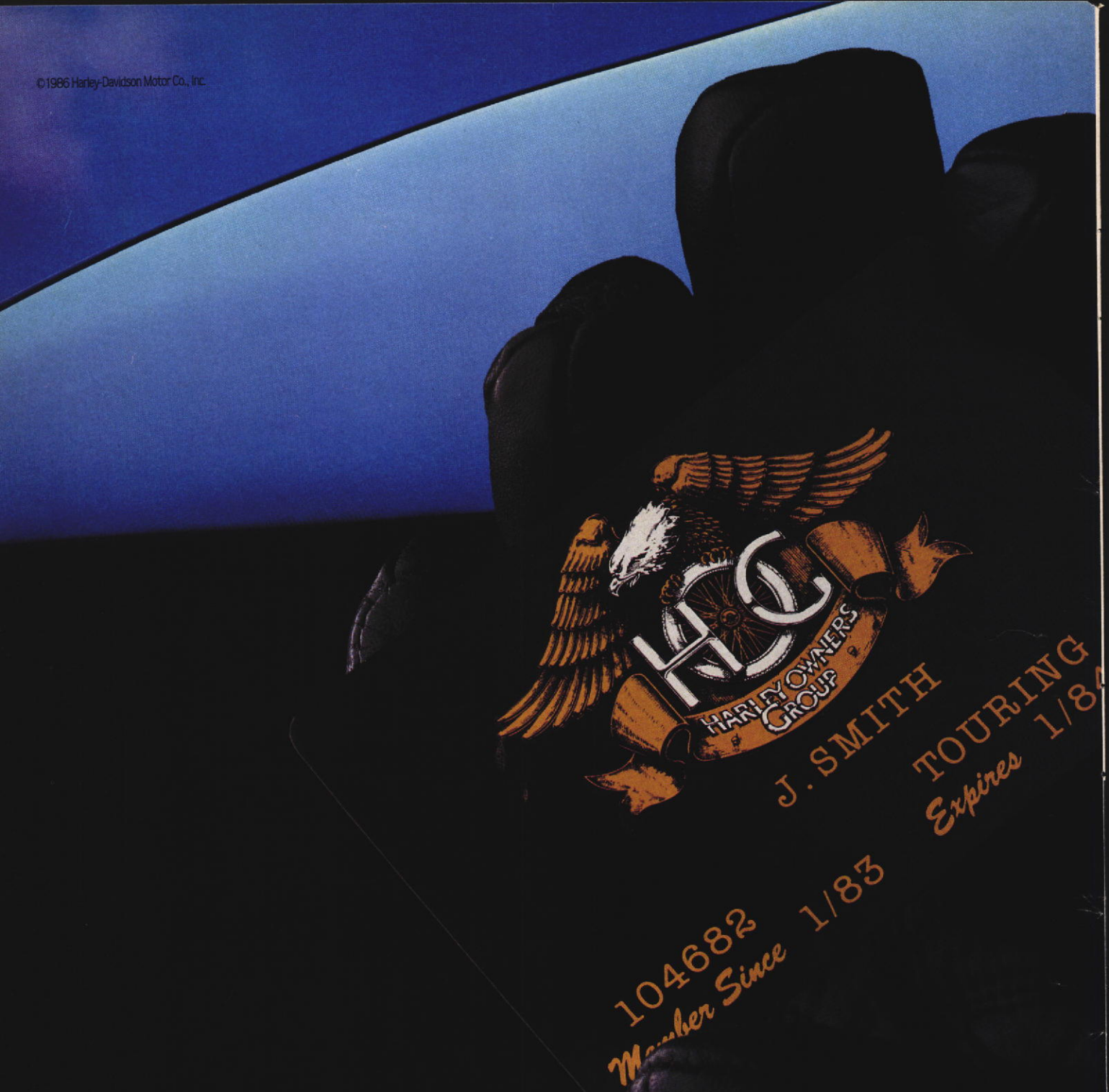

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Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am 320 Trials-'84	October '84	Trials	Two-stroke	4.8/4.5	205	25.5/3.00	6
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.C	311	N/A	5
Honda ATC350X-'85	September '85	ATV	Four-stroke	8.0/7.0	324	23.0/1.4	6
Honda FourTrax 4x4-'86	Nov./Dec. '85	ATV	Four-stroke	4.1/4.6	570	3.0/0.5	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'86	February '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.0	221	27.5/4.41	5
Honda CR500R-'85	February '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	232	27.5/4.41	5
Honda XR600R-'85	October '85	Desert	Four-stroke	10.9/11.4	284	28.0/4.65	5
Husqvarna 250WRX-'85	August '85	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.8/12.5	239	27.0/4.72	6
Husqvarna 430 Auto-'86	March '86	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.7/11.5	245	27.0/4.72	3
Husqvarna 500CR-'85	April '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.9	235	27.0/4.72	4
Husqvarna 510TE-'85	March '85	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.6/11.9	263	28.5/5.16	6
Kawasaki KDX200-'86	March '86	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	225	26.5/5.31	6
Kawasaki KX125-'86	January '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.6	201	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/8.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
KTM 500MX-'86	June '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.9/10.8	227	28.0/N/A	5
Suzuki Quadracer 250-'85	May '85	ATV	Two-stroke	7.2/8.1	326	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'85	May '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.4/11.8	202	29.0/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Yamaha BW200-'85	April '85	Trail	Four-stroke	6.3/6.6	249	27.3/3.46	5
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha TT350-'86	May '86	Trail	Four-stroke	10.4/9.3	261	27.5/4.53	6
Yamaha TT600-'85	October '85	Trail	Four-stroke	11.3/10.7	283	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha TY350-'85	July '85	Trials	Two-stroke	6.5/4.8	193	23.0/1.93	6
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'86	April '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.0	225	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW K75C-'86	June '86	3I/G	740.4	13.171/102.03	121	480	37–54	142
BMW K100-'86	March '86	4I/G	987.2	12.412/108.82	122	506	35–46	139
BMW K100RT-'86	May '86	4I/G	987.2	13.255/98.90	130	595	39–44	124
BMW R80-'85	September '85	2C/G	782.5	13.357/98.36	114	439	37–52	148
Cagiva Alazzurra 650 SS-'86	February '86	90 deg. 2D/F	649.6	12.982/99.18	113	432	34–49	135
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'86	May '86	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.378/90.00	107	748	39–48	141
H-D FXRS Low Rider Sport-'86	Nov./Dec. '85	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.654/96.25	115	592	31–50	132
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'85	October '84	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.180/90.36	92	640	28–51	126
H-D XLH 883 Sportster-'86	September '85	45 deg. 2D/F	882.9	14.045/92.40	106	467	37–67	131
Honda Gold Wing Aspencade.-'86	May '86	4C/G	1181.9	13.590/96.56	114	761	32–48	120
Honda Gold Wing Ltd Ed.-'85	March '85	4C/G	1181.9	13.346/98.36	113	810	37–45	134
Honda NS250R-'85	May '85	90 deg. 2D/F††	249.3	13.091/101.58	121	339	27–38	135
Honda NS400R-'85	October '85	90 deg. 3D/F††	387.4	12.324/108.69	125	392	25–45	135
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF700C Magna-'85	August '85	90 deg. 4D/G	698.9	12.390/108.82	128	520	34–47	131
Honda VFR750F Interceptor-'86	June '86	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.407/120.48	144	476	33–55	128
Honda VF1000R-'85	July '85	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.308/121.78	149	578	20–42	135
Honda VT1100C Shadow-'85	June '85	45 deg. 2D/G	1099.2	13.022/100.33	112	560	33–44	127
Honda V65 Magna-'85	February '85	90 deg. 4D/G	1098.0	11.440/118.42	142	566	34–46	133
Kawasaki 454 LTD-'85	September '85	2A/H	454.1	13.386/97.08	102	427	37–53	125
Kawasaki GPz550-'85	March '85	4A/F	553.8	12.478/104.89	121	432	44–54	137
Kawasaki GPz750 turbo-'85	Nov./Dec. '85	4A/F	739.0	11.441/118.89	141	532	40–54	135
Kawasaki Eliminator-'85	April '85	4A/G	908.2	11.405/117.49	134	569	22–41	131
Kawasaki Ninja 600R-'85	March '85	4A/F	592.6	12.124/109.09	135	448	40–48	135
Kawasaki Ninja-'85	August '85	4A/F	908.2	11.175/123.79	151	535	32–41	131
Kawasaki Ninja 1000R-'86	January '86	4A/F	997.8	10.994/125.69	162	564	33–44	118
Kawasaki Voyager-'86	May '86	6A/G	1286.1	13.240/99.44	119	878	32–39	142
Suzuki GS550ES-'85	May '85	4A/F	572.3	12.551/106.50	119	447	33–48	133
Suzuki GSX-R750-'86	April '86	4A/F	749.7	11.566/116.42	142	437	30–47	136
Suzuki GS1150E-'85	June '85	4A/F	1135.4	11.032/121.78	146	529	30–55	138
Suzuki GV700GL Madura-'85	Nov./Dec. '84	82 deg. 4D/G	698.5	13.307/102.15	111	546	23–45	143
Suzuki GV1200GL Madura-'85	February '85	82 deg. 4D/G	1165.9	11.364/117.18	140	576	28–45	131
Suzuki GV1400GD Cavalcade LX-'86	May '86	82 deg. 4D/G	1360.4	12.881/101.12	115	806	32–43	155
Suzuki RG500 Gamma-'85	October '85	Square-Four/F††	498.5	11.991/113.20	N/A	374	22–42	134
Suzuki VS700GLF Intruder-'85	July '85	2D/G	699.7	12.998/101.01	112	442	44–63	132
Yamaha FJ1100-'85	April '85	4A/F	1097.6	11.002/123.28	147	543	30–47	138
Yamaha FZ750-'86	March '86	45 deg. 4A/F	749.6	11.383/118.26	145	494	37–45	127
Yamaha RZV500R-'84	October '85	4D/F††	499.7	12.409/107.52	134	422	25–53	147
Yamaha Venture Royale-'86	May '86	70 deg. 4D/G	1294.0	12.998/101.01	136†	784	39–44	130
Yamaha V-Max-'85	May '85	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	10.922/127.47	151	596	23–32	137
Yamaha XV700 Virago-'86	March '86	75 deg. 2D/G	699.2	13.686/96.46	104†	489	39–48	130
Yamaha XV1000 Virago-'85	October '85	75 deg. 2D/G	981.0	12.993/101.59	111	507	33–47	132

*A-Transverse, B-Vertical (single-cylinder only), C-Horizontally Opposed, D-Tandem Vee, E-Transverse Vee, F-Chain Final Drive, G-Shaft Final Drive, H-Belt Final Drive, I-Horizontal Longitudinal; † indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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Voice From The Wilderness

Offensive Driving

I'm not paranoid; they're trying to kill me.

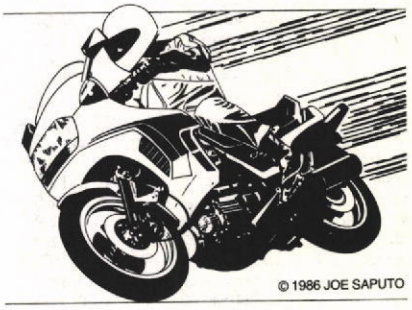
• "The meek shall be run over by fat guys in white Buicks"—I said that.

Sorry, but I just don't buy this stuff about defensive driving being the answer to carnage on the streets. It's not enough for motorcyclists. Don't get me wrong. I've taken the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's classes a couple of times, and done well, I might say. (I can behave myself when I'm being graded.) The MSF class instructors emphasize emergency accident-avoidance skills. Those guys are good, and they're teaching stuff we all need to know. Even after I had been riding for 18 years, they still taught me some things I didn't know; it's a humbling experience but well worth it. I left the MSF advanced class feeling like it would take an assassin in a very fast truck to get me.

I don't disagree with the MSF approach, as far as it goes. Everybody ought to take the Foundation classes before sharing the roads with those other guys. After all, you just can't go out there dicing with the four-wheeled semiconscious every day and expect to get away with it using the same skills that help you beat your buddies to your Sunday morning brunch rendezvous at the end of the twisties. That's like taking a fencing foil against a guy with a sawed-off shotgun. The MSF teaches about the dangers lurking out there and how to predict and handle them.

I've been riding motorcycles on the street since I was 15, and consider myself fortunate to have survived the first five years. There weren't any MSF classes then. In fact, nobody where I lived then wore a helmet. Safety and motorcycling were considered mutually exclusive in those days. My survival was pure scab luck, lasting until I learned some urban-asphalt skills as a motorcycle courier several years later in Washington, D.C.

In 1970, I applied for a job as a courier at one of the messenger services that kept pre-subway Washington, D.C., from permanent daytime gridlock. The nation's capital runs on paper and hot air. The paper has to move from one office to the next, and since the taxpayers are paying the bill one way or the other, a lot of the paper moving gets done by motorcycle couriers. The mail is too slow and secretaries' time is better spent doing the boss's work than delivering his missives through the rotten weather. Better than that, in



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the city that invented power lunching and power phoning, the power mongers didn't overlook the impact of having a guy in black leather deliver your memo on a roaring crotch rocket.

Courier work, at least back then, was not for the faint-hearted. It was an all-year job, with cold rain, ice and snow in the winter and steaming heat and deadly tourists in station wagons during the summer.

The guy who accepted my application was the owner of the messenger service. It made sense to me. I figured he wasn't interested in hiring some would-be street racer who would bend up the company's bikes and send his insurance premiums into the ionosphere. So I played it tame and polite. Then he plunked me on a nasty handling Kawasaki 350cc two-stroke twin. For himself, he grabbed a comparatively sweet Suzuki X-6 Hustler with sticky tires and said, "Stick with me."

I figured he'd want to see my hand signals and smooth clutch technique (take it easy and be nice to the bike, etc.). Instead, he wheelied the Hustler out of the lot, slid the back end out in the first righthander and was hitting fourth gear a half mile ahead of me before I figured out this wasn't a two-wheel etiquette drill.

I caught up and hung on his tail, weaving through the city, splitting lanes and screaming into my helmet. More than once, I recall, I asked myself how much I wanted the job.

When it was over, the guy hired me. He told me first, though, that the point of our little ride through the city was intended to show me the difference between aggressive and stupid. He said it was OK for me to be aggressive, because everybody else on the streets would take care of the stupid. The guy's philosophy was that if you rode hard, kept on your toes and assumed every other driver was going to do the worst thing possible, you'd be fine.

This has worked for me. It saved me from the routine accidents that plagued most couriers during the two years I worked the streets in D.C. I still ride aggressively, though not as visciously as then. But my attitude is that everyone is trying to kill me. Despite what you might think, this doesn't make me paranoid and unhappy while I'm on the streets. Quite the opposite, this assumption removes the guess work.

To assume the other people crowding the streets are competent drivers and benevolent humans is dangerous for a motorcyclist. Most people are barely conscious of what's really going on around them. (Pull up to a red light, start to pull away and chances are good three of the four lemmings around you will run the red light without even looking. Just watch the guy behind you.) Witness the number of them who bend up their cars, trucks and bikes every day. Those aren't really "accidents"; they're stupid dents—they happened because somebody screwed up.

Although most drivers can screw up without much help, there are those who further handicap themselves. Experts say as many as one in every 20 drivers is legally drunk. Chances are good he isn't a very good driver to start with, and probably not too damned concerned about the next guy. The remaining 19 might be sober, but they're probably incompetent drivers. You know there's something wrong with this country's license requirements when the toughest section of most driving tests is parallel parking. I took a motorcycle test in one state that involved having the "inspector" walk outside, watch me leave the parking lot and then wait for me to return. When I made it back apparently unscathed, he passed me.

And you're going to trust people who haven't proved any more skill than that to share the road with you? Not me.

For all those reasons, I ride hard and let people in four-wheelers know I'm around. It's the only way to survive. Car drivers who have been involved in accidents with motorcyclists (especially that number-one killer, the oncoming left turn in front of the cyclist) inevitably say, "I didn't see him." Well, they usually see me, and if they don't it doesn't matter; I already assumed they were blind and had every intention of running me over anyway. —*Dan Sorenson*

YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SAVE ON ONE OF THE BIGGEST SALES IN MOTORCYCLE HISTORY.

GET ON THE FAST TRACK TO SAVINGS ON THESE GREAT BIKES
These are just a sample of the exciting models now being featured at your Suzuki dealer.

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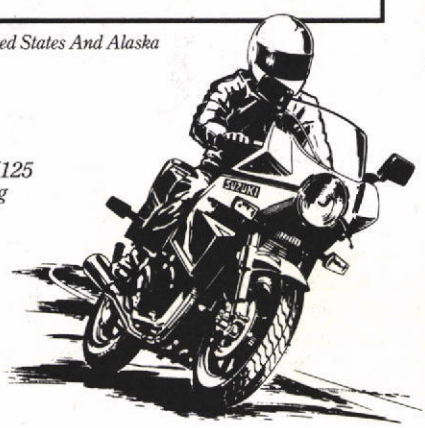

Now you can take advantage of big savings on a limited number of great bikes. And we mean save like never before. Because right now, these bikes are priced incredibly low. And on top of this already low price, **participating Suzuki dealers** have been given factory incentives of up to $400. And that could mean even bigger savings for you. But there's only one way to find out. Move it on down to a **participating Suzuki dealer** today, at these prices, they're practically giving these bikes away.

This is a sale of a lifetime and will not be repeated. Don't miss it. And you'd better hurry. This offer valid April 1st thru May 31st, 1986. And when there's no more bikes, there's no more sale. Come in now and save like never before. You could be part of one of the biggest events in motorcycle history.

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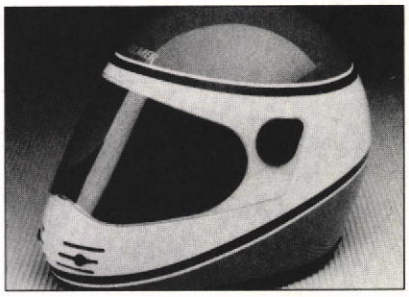
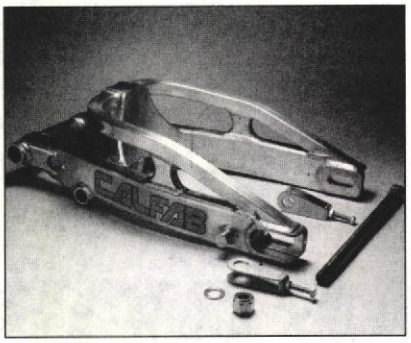
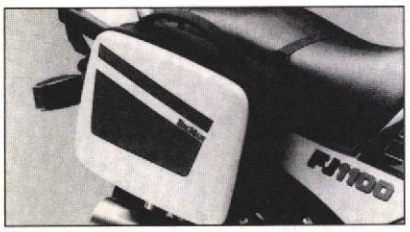
A Golden Touch: ATVs kept in mint condition run as good as gold on rough rides. Golden Spectro ATV from Spectro Oils is a synthetic blend designed to prevent piston seizure, scuffing and ring wear, and offers clean burning in both air- and liquid-cooled two-strokes. Special additives keep plugs clean and prevent rust and corrosion damage, claims Spectro, and also eliminate carbon build-up and exhaust plugging. Golden Spectro ATV is available in 12-ounce bottles for a suggested retail price of $3.10. Start your own gold rush by contacting Spectro Oils of America, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 208, Brookfield, Connecticut 06804.

Keep Your Head: Full-coverage helmets don't have to leave you steamed in summer; Arthur Fulmer's vented HT-100 helmet is designed for protection, style *and* comfort. Made of solvent-resistant Ronfalin, the helmet features a ratcheted multiposition faceshield, adjustable air vents and a cordury interior. A quick-release chin strap with a padded cover keeps the DOT-approved helmet where it belongs. The red-white-and-blue colors might turn some heads, too. The HT-100 comes in sizes S–XL for a $99.95 suggested retail price; it also has a one-year limited warranty. Get a head start; contact the Arthur Fulmer Co., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 177, Memphis, Tennessee 38101.



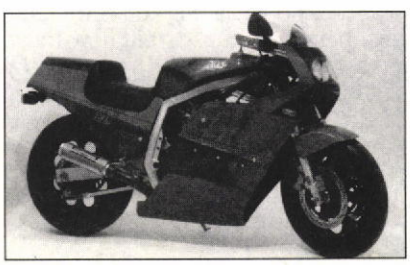


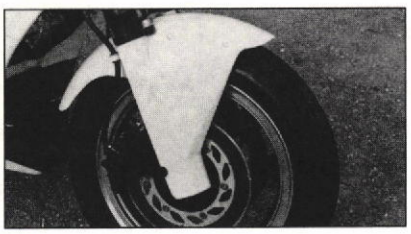
Swingarm To Go: If your bike's handling won't cut the mustard any more, here's an accessory you might relish. Cal Fab's aluminum Works Replica swingarm is designed for Superbike racing or hot-dogging it through the canyons. It features a 20mm hollow 4130 chromoly axle. In addition, Cal Fab claims its swingarm eliminates flex and allows the use of a wider-than-stock tire. Each swingarm is handmade to order for your Yamaha FZ750 or Suzuki GSX-R750 and suggested retail price is $600. Ketchup on all the information from Cal Fab Inc., Dept. CG, 4527 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, California 92807.



Saddle 'Em Up: Has your iron steed got you looking for over-the-saddle storage? It might behoove you to consider Vetter Bagman's Hi-Tech Saddlebag, more than just a horse of a different color. A combination of both hard *and* soft luggage, the bags are made of double-stitched, 1000-denier Cordura with a water-resistant coating, combined with a hard-plastic outer and an ABS inner support shell. Other features include inside pockets and compartments with YKK zippers; the mounting system allows for individual removal. Vetter claims the capacity expands from 36 liters to 54 liters. They're available in a various coordinated colors at a $199.95 suggested retail price. Don't stall; get more from your nearest dealer or Vetter Products Inc., Dept. CG, Rantoul, Illinois 61866.

We're Not In Kansas Anymore: It doesn't take much wizardry to make your stock GSX-R750 look as exotic as something from over the rainbow—in fact, all you might need is Yoshimura's Tornado kit. Included are a wind-tunnel-tested fairing with quartz headlights, turn signals, a solo seat, tailsection and side covers. The aluminum gas tank comes with an airbox cavity for stock fuel capacity, or without the cavity for an additional 3 liters of fuel capacity. The fairing comes in stock GSX-R colors, metallic flake gray or unfinished. Tornado parts are available separately or as a package for about $2200. Get your heels clicking; follow the yellow brick road to your local dealer or Yoshimura R&D of America Inc., Dept. CG, 4555 Carter Court, Chino, California 91710.





Gone In The Wind: Don't give a damn anymore because battling stone-chipped fork legs leaves you more frustrated than a parched Yankee with a Dixie cup? Keep a civil tongue; Windslicks' fork fairings might provide the leeway you've looked for. Their impact-resistant plastic construction is more flexible and stronger than fiberglass, the manufacturer says, yet weigh less than a pound. In addition, the covers are also claimed to control airflow around the fork and brakes. The covers are available in white or black for suggested retail prices of $32.95 for forward sweeps or $24.94 for rearward sweeps. If you cotton to them, just contact Windslicks, Surface Explorations Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 1617, Palo Alto, California 94301.

THE ULTIMATE IN MOTOCROSS VACATIONS!

AMERICA'S ONLY 500cc WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

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SATURDAY, June 28th - Noon

Dave Thorpe
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Johnny O'Mara
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Miller High Life Beer

Watch the World's 500cc stars battle it out on Saturday, June 28th and then ride the very same course on Sunday, June 29th in the 1986 PRO-AM CHALLENGE. (all classes)

TYPE OF TICKET	REGULAR	ADVANCE	QUANTITY	TOTALS
One day adult	$15.00	$13.00	x	= $
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Grandstand	$20.00	$20.00	x	= $
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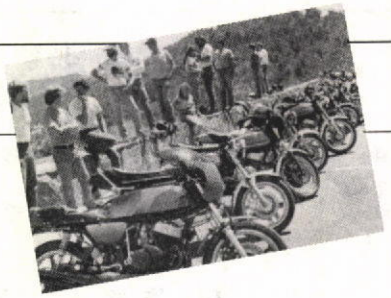
TELEPHONE ORDERS ACCEPTED — Charge-by-phone (714)498-0460 8:00 A.M. — 6:00 P.M. Pacific Time. Up until 10 days prior. Or send check or money order: personal check orders not sent until check clears! ***Grand Prix Motocross, Inc., Box 1256, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693.*** *Carlsbad Raceway is located 30 miles north of San Diego and 60 miles south of Orange County.*

Advance tickets also available at Ticketron or Teleseat.

Sorry, no overnight camping at the track. For camping and other vacation information, contact the ***Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 597, Carlsbad, CA 92008. (619) 729-5924***

DON'T FORGET THE 500cc NATIONAL ON AUGUST 17th AT HOLLISTER!

LETTERS *Test rides, triples and truck testiness.*



NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

Regarding Dan Sorenson's column, April 1986 CYCLE GUIDE.

This letter is to inform your readers that I just purchased a 1973 Norton Commando Interstate. This letter will also put Dan Sorenson on notice that he will no longer receive an invitation to ride my motorcycles.

And wait until Dan sees my 1986 FJ1200. '76 R90S *indeed.*

"Turbo" Steve Galper
Tucson, Arizona

OLD RELIABLE

I very much enjoyed the article on Kawasaki triples (April 1986). I'm glad there are people like Fran Golden around who care enough to start a club for this rare breed of two-stroke.

I bought my H1 new in 1974 and have never had to take it back for repairs of any kind. Other than replacing the battery, chain and tires I've had virtually no problems with the bike in 11 years of riding.

Please let me know how I can contact the Kawasaki Triples Club.

J. Ondras
Portage, Indiana

TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

Ah, the Kawasaki Mach III. My best friend got a dark green one while we were still in high school. Fifty cents' worth of gas would buy an entire Saturday afternoon of riding. He'd drive and I'd bounce off the back.

The engine fouled plugs below 3000 rpm, vibrated like a paint mixer and sounded like a batallion of enraged buzz-saws. The handgrips closely approximated the sensation of playing catch with a cactus. When my buddy gave rides to the neighborhood girls, they'd cling to him for dear life—poor fella. Anyway, thanks for the memories.

Tom Shaw
Giddings, Texas

TRIPLE TRANSFUSION

Having just read the article on Kawasaki triples, I'm very excited to see these almost-forgotten superbikes finally getting the recognition they deserve.

I've been in America for four years now, having originally come from England, and I grew up with S2s and S3s. I've had two H1s and a couple of years ago I picked up a 1972 H2. I guess you could say triples are in my blood.

Please print the address of the Kawasaki Triples Club so I can join up!

Brian Mills
Bradenton, Florida

The Kawasaki Triples Club can be reached at 1076 N. Gracia, Camarillo, California 93010—ed.

COVER STORY

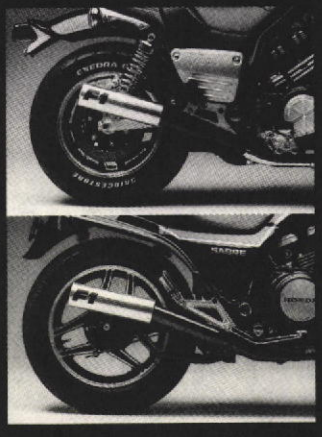
Of all the motorcycle magazines on the market, yours is the only one I subscribe to. I especially enjoy the "Guide Lines" section and the pictures of exotic machinery not sold in the U.S.

I also enjoy your cover photography,

LOOKS FAST.

From $129.95 a pair

F1



HONDA
All Interceptors
All Sabres
FT/VT Ascots
Nighthawk S
700 Magnas 85-86
V65 Magnas 85-86

YAMAHA
FJ1100/1200
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V-Max

KAWASAKI
250 Ninja
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When we introduced F1's to the public back in the fall of '83, the first cannister style slip-on muffler was born.

With the bikes of today having such lightning power and speed, we tackled the exhaust market a little differently. Give the customer that race bike style, good mellow sound, no rejetting and easy installation. Most of all at a modest price. At $129.95, F1's are the lowest priced mufflers on the market. V-Max and Magna's at $179.95. Ascots only $70.00.

Our convictions have come true. Today F1's are the number one selling mufflers. And the most copied.

Send $1.00 for our '86 color catalog. To order call (714) 779-7798. Or send a check for the correct

LETTERS

with one exception: You always stick the address label over something neat like the engine or the lower fairing or one of the wheels. How about sticking the label on the *back* cover?

Brock Wilborn
Dripping Springs, Texas

We tried that once, but everyone ended up reading the magazine backwards—ed.

THE FREE RIDE IS OVER

I read with interest that Bell Helmets has filed a counterclaim on a groundless product-liability suit. I wish Bell great success against the many people who seem to believe everything is someone else's fault.

Motorcycle riders as well as our whole society must be responsible for their actions. Let's put an end to these legal free rides and save everyone time and money.

Larry Schultz
Fremont, California

Schultz is a charter member of the Moss Landing BSA Underwater Drill Team—ed.

DON'T KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

This is only the second time I've ever written to a magazine. I only write when I think it's important.

In the middle of the April issue of CYCLE GUIDE are four color pages of Nissan trucks. Take them out, please. I don't like these ads in motorcycle magazines. Next thing it'll be cigarettes, toilet paper, Playboy, fishing gear and Campbell's soup.

I'm taking the truck ads out of my copy of CYCLE GUIDE, so why can't you? I know they bring in money, but so does cocaine, and I don't want that in my magazine, either.

Harry Keller
Owensboro, Kentucky

That's understandable, but what have you got against Campbell's soup?—ed.

THE FORTUNES OF FORBES

In response to the comments of Gary Clay and Kelly Howard (April 1986) regarding Malcolm Forbes' travels: I think both of you are missing the point of the entire effort.

Forbes is probably one of this country's staunchest and ablest ambassadors. It isn't his highly visible lifestyle that makes him so well regarded, but rather his honest love for his country, his outspokenness about the "American way of life," his forthright and candid conversations with heads of state, industry leaders and the common man, and his honesty in all things.

Sure, he's a flag-waver. What's wrong with that? Given half his opportunities, I'd do the same. I'd like to think Forbes has made an effort, albeit in a somewhat unusual way, toward improving relations between China and our own wonderful country.

John R. Greene
Simi Valley, California

Given half his money, we'd do the same—ed.

TRIUMPH OF TIME

I'd like to say L.J.K. Setright's calumny about "vibratory" BSA and Triumph triples (January 1986) is a load of

Continued

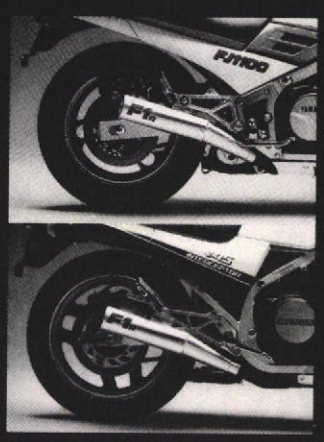
GOES FAST.

From $199.95 a pair

F1R's were introduced to fill another void, slip-on mufflers for the performance minded rider.

With this in mind our engineers designed another first. The revolutionary aluminum street muffler, the F1R. Externally a masterpiece, internally a power booster, up to 20%. F1R's were first to have reverse coned megaphones to unleash power and speed. First to weigh just 5½ pounds a set and require no rejetting. So they slip onto your bike in minutes. Only $199.95 a set; $229.95 for Eliminators.

So don't be fooled by imitators. Ask for the originators, F1's or F1R's.



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1000 Ninja
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amount plus $5.00 shipping to F1, 4760 E. Bryson, Anaheim, CA 92807. We accept M/C and Visa.

LETTERS

hogswill. Where do motojournalists pick up this sort of myth-making nonsense? My Triumph triple is no Gold Wing, but it's no cement mixer, either. And I speak from experience, which is apparently more than Setright can say.

"Little lamented" indeed. All those old British triples were was a bunch of 12-second quarter-mile, mechanically simple, great looking bikes that had probably the most trouble-free engines the British ever built. I enjoy parking my black and gold Trident in the midst of a pack of V-Maxes, GS1100s and the like and watching everyone zero in on it while they ignore the rest.

So, L.J.K., if you're in the legend-making business, puff up a marque's good points. That's standard procedure. Just don't fabricate legends from thin bias and hearsay.

Ross Nelson
Provo, Utah

We'll buy everything but "mechanically simple," Nelson. Ever try to change the countershaft sprocket on your Trident?—ed.

WE'RE ON A ROLL

I was delighted to read about the new Honda VFR750 (March 1986). As the former owner of an '84 VF750, I was anxious to find out how the new VFR performed and handled.

I'm also curious as to how the rider in the pictures could have achieved such radical lean angles with his visor all fogged up from saying "Vrooom vrooom" to himself on that convenient downgrade. I can only imagine what could be accomplished on a running version of the same machine. By the way, do you think the production version will have a brighter headlight?

Keep up the good work on the early previews.

Timothy Babb
Barrington, Illinois

Perhaps the headlight explains the dim view some people took on the piece—ed.

BLOCK PARTY

In reference to the Ride/Report in your March 1986 issue on Nostalgia Cycle's Super Vee engine, Chevrolet's 350-cubic-inch V-8 engines (actually 351.86 cubic inches) have a 4.0-inch bore with a 3.5-inch stroke, not 3.75 inches as Jerry Smith stated. The 3.75-inch stroke would work out to 376.99 cubic inches; not a bad idea for a small block, but also not stock. A bore of 4.0 inches and a stroke of 3.75 inches does work out to 771.5cc per cylinder, though.

Rahn Walling
Huntington Beach, California

Apparently, whoever gave Smith the figures on a stock small block was stroking him—ed.

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses.

Questions or comments? You can talk with the CYCLE GUIDE staff by calling (213) 328-5700. Phones will be answered Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.—5 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.

"...S100 is the best I've used..."

—Mike Gillies, *Cycle Guide Magazine Product Review*, Jan. '86

You always expect companies to brag about their own products, so for a refreshing change we thought we'd let the pros who have used new **S100 Total Cycle Cleaner** do the talking.

What they're raving about is an entirely new concept in cycle cleaning from Germany. Simply spray it over the whole cycle, hit it with a sharp stream of cool water and *PRESTO!* Clean machine! No scrubbing, no polishing and no drying. And it treats the machine like a baby. Kind to paint, alloy, rubber, plastic and anything else except dirt, which it demolishes. Loaded with corrosion inhibitors, and no film left to attract dirt.

S100 is available in the deluxe package and money saving refill sizes. And even though **S100** isn't cheap, **S100** will help you take better care of your machine and enable you to spend more time riding it, so **S100** is really worth getting to know.

How do you get Germany's (and now America's) super cycle cleaner? It's available at most authorized Harley Davidson dealers and many other quality motorcycle shops. If you can't locate **S100**, please have a dealer contact us at the address below so we can steer him to an **S100** distributor. And so you can get the best thing in cycle care to come along in a long time. Oops, sorry, we bragged a little there, afterall.

"...finest cleaner ever made."
Boswell's Harley Davidson, Nashville TN

"It's fantastic."
Lone Star Cycle Motive, Austin TX

"...best thing we've seen to clean cycles."
Engle Motors, Kansas City MO

"Excellent product. It does what they say it does."
San Jose BMW, San Jose CA

S100™ **TOTAL CYCLE CLEANER**
Cycle Care Made Simple!
MADE IN GERMANY

A Smartparts product from Dept CG, 11 Business Park Dr., Branford, CT 06405
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FOX

Fox Soft-Leather Jackets

Beautiful new jackets made from glove-soft leather. Touch and feel the quality. Velcro® closed collar. 3 Colors available: Red/Grey; Blue/Grey or Black/Grey. Sizes: XS,S,M,L,XL. Two models: With zip-out lining, or Reversible.

Lined $175 **Reversible $150**

Fred Merkel

New

SportPaws™

New for '86! The sleek look of action in an all-leather glove. Two colors: Red/Whi/Blu or Red/Whi/Black. Sizes: S,M,L,XL.

$24.50

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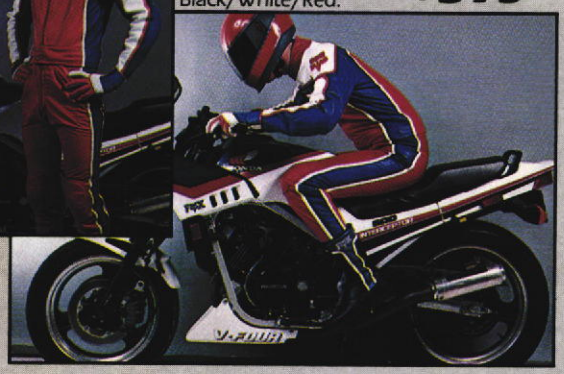

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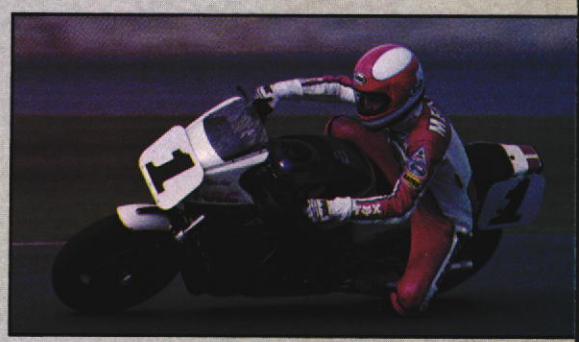

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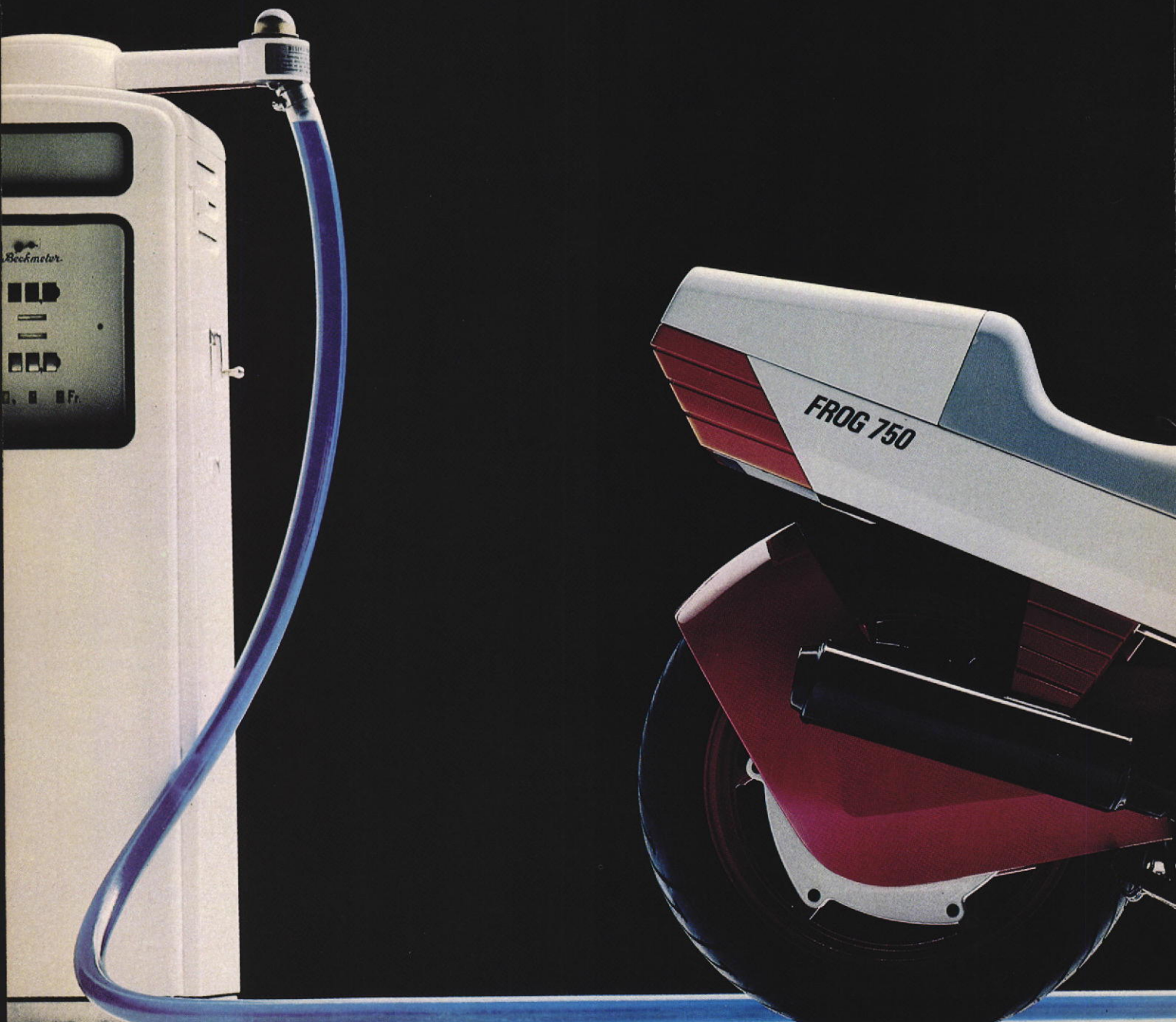
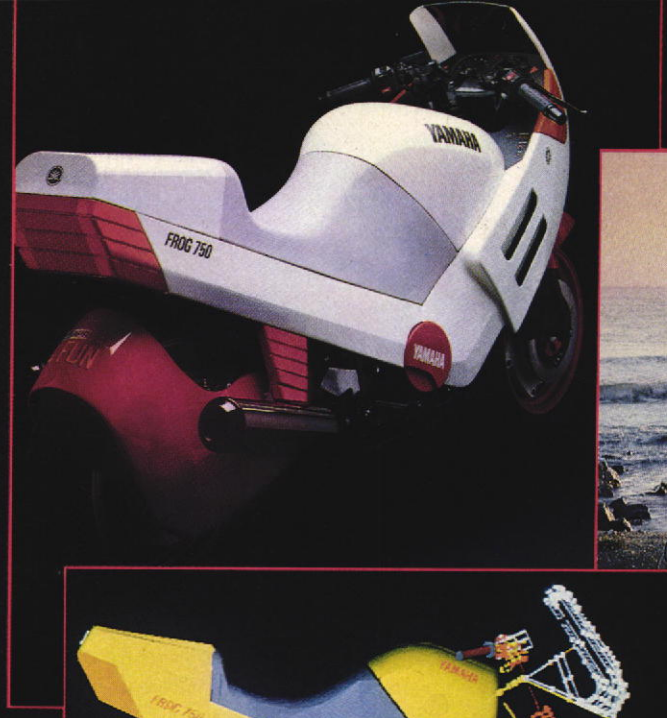
SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME:

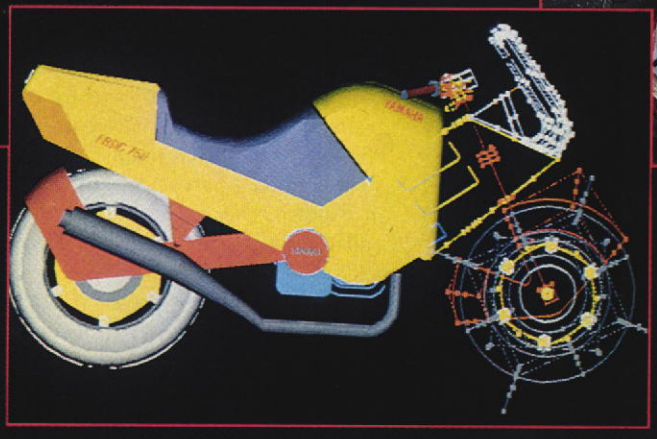
FROGDESIGN FZ750

Yamaha's Samurai warrior gets fitted with European armor.

BY JIM MILLER







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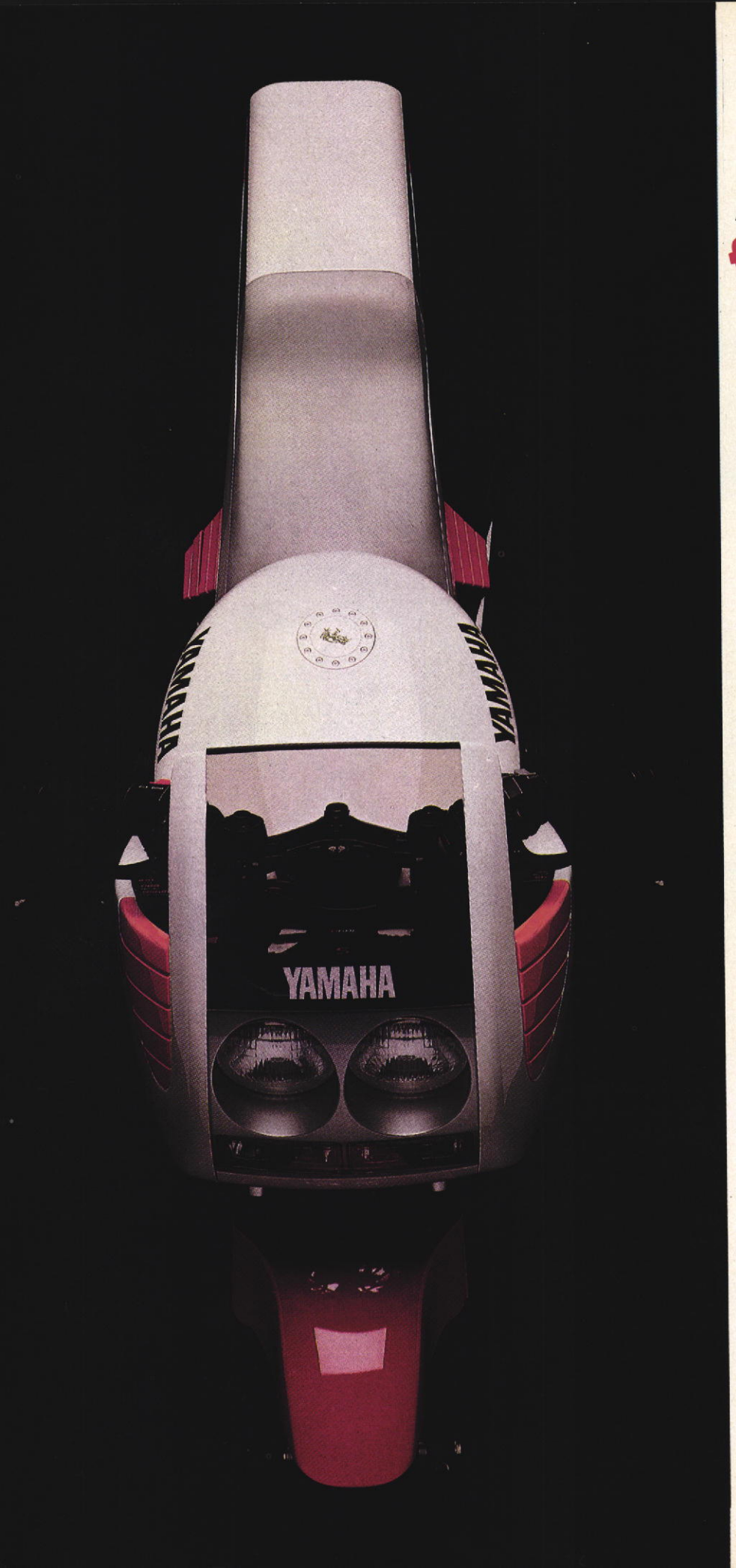

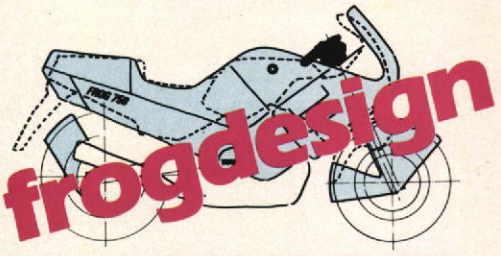

What you see here might well be a vision of the future—maybe even the not-so-distant future. This FZ750 is under "active consideration" by Yamaha for production, possibly as early as 1988, but it's never seen the soft lights and drawing boards of a Japanese design studio. Instead, this vision in white satin appears here courtesy of Hartmut Esslinger of frogdesign, a German industrial-design firm, via a tortuous route that began in Stuggart, West Germany, and ended, oddly enough, in Campbell, California, just outside San Jose.

Despite rave reviews by the press about its overall sporting competence, Yamaha's premier sportbike received less-than-flattering appraisals of its styling. That's particularly true in Europe, where sportbiking's tastemakers panned the FZ's production-racer look, with its truncated fairing and blacked-out engine. Germany's Motorrad magazine went even further than to condemn the FZ's looks: It garnered comments from a group of five European designers, whose complaints about the FZ's styling ran the gamut from primitive graphics to poor proportions. Finally, Motorrad invited the five to participate in a competition to improve on the original.

One of those who picked up the gauntlet was frogdesign's Hartmut Esslinger, who took the invitation back to his California studio and proceeded past the paper stage requested by Motorrad. "Actually, we were planning to build a motorcycle anyway, since there are a number of motorcyclists on staff," Esslinger recalls. "Initially, we planned to do a Honda VF1000R, but when the Motorrad competition came up, we decided to do the FZ." Rather than simply drawing up rough sketches, though, frogdesign actually purchased an FZ750, stripped off the bodywork, carefully measured the engine/chassis of the Yamaha and entered the figures in the company's Intergraph CAD/CAM system. The computer graphics allowed the firm to study the FZ from any angle or perspective, and design the bike as a complete, three-dimensional vehicle. Ultimately, frogdes-

sign not only submitted drawings, but also a 1/5-scale model to Motorrad's competition. When the Frog 750 won, Esslinger and company took their design one step further and built a full-scale prototype, based on the actual FZ750.

It's appropriate that they decided to build the full-scale model, too, because the Frog 750 is more than a simple cosmetic redesign, and incorporates a number of functional refinements. For instance, mounted under the dual headlights is a pair of wide-angle cornering lights, intended to increase the rider's forward vision during low-speed cornering. Conversely, the large, bright-orange turnsignals/running lights are designed to increase the Frog's visibility to others.

Esslinger et al. also spent a good deal of effort on the Frog 750's rider accommodations. The windshield, for example, is slightly taller and less swept-back than the stock item, and the trailing edges of the fairing flare out slightly near the rider's knees. Combined with the Frog's slightly lower seat height, the fairing should provide better wind protection. Moreover, the fairing's smooth forward edge should reduce aerodynamic turbulence, and frogdesign claims the bike's fenders and tailsection are also designed to improve airflow.

That tailsection also is intended to flip up to provide a small storage space, just one of several mechanical bons mots, if you will. Another example is the passenger footpegs, which are incorporated into the flutes of the rear muffler carriers. In addition, the Frog's instruments include an analog tach and speedo, combined with digital readouts for temperature, oil pressure and other vital engine functions, displayed along the inside edge of the fairing. The LEDs are illuminated only when there is a problem, while a warning light between the tach and speedo—a la Kawasaki GPz—brings attention to any out-of-the-ordinary readings.

Not all of frogdesign's trickery is quite so apparent, however, because the original design calls for some exotic materials, at least as far as production motorcycles go. First off, the disc-type wheels, (one of several suggestions from Dennis Steffani, Yamaha's Manager of New Products and Research) are designed to be Kevlar/carbon-fiber composite. While there's nothing unique about carbon-fiber—at least in design studies—the actual body panels are quite innovative. Esslinger proposes that the Frog 750's body be constructed of a flexible, color-impregnated outer skin with a flexible foam underneath, much like the bumpers on some

Continued

A Peek Under The Lily Pad

Who are those guys?

• With the possible exception of Hans Muth and Fritz Egli, motorcycle designers are generally unknown to the general public. In fact, industrial designers usually garner a resounding "who?" with the general public. So you can be excused if you don't recognize the names of Hartmut Esslinger and the group that makes up frogdesign—particularly since the Frog 750 is the company's first attempt at a motorcycle.

But unless you've spent the last several years in a tree, this FZ is not the first time you've seen frogdesign's work. The company counts Eastman Kodak, Polaroid, Apple Computer (the IIc is a frogdesign original), Soni and Ford of Europe in its list of clients, and that's only a *short* partial list. One of frogdesign's works, the Wega Concept, a home stereo system, is on permanent display in New York's Museum of Modern Art. Suffice it to say that you're not dealing with a bunch of bush leaguers.

As founder and driving force behind frogdesign, Esslinger shuttles between the company's two studios: one in Altensteig, West Germany (Altensteig's mascot, the frog, is the source of the company's name), and the other in Campbell, California. And a visit to the Campbell facility leaves you with two distinct impressions: First, this is a very European design studio, and second, this is a very *expensive* studio. In fact, given the opportunity, Esslinger will point out that his is the most expensive design studio in the country.

It's also an intensely proud collection of people who work here, and that pride is reflected in all of frogdesign's work. A Prussian maxim, "Mehr sein als scheinen," (Reality must be better than the image), reflects their dedication to their work, and also reflects the overall impression of the Frog 750. As striking as the bike is in photos, it's even more so in the studio. The finish far exceeds what you would expect of a one-off showbike, with no rough edges hidden behind a facade of glossy fiberglass.

Of course, that level of finish isn't the work of a single person. In addition to Esslinger, Gert Teschner and Fritz Wurster, both dedicated motorcyclists, were instrumental in its design, as well as Fred Polito and Felix Abarca, who push the buttons on the group's CAD/CAM equipment. Teschner and Esslinger played tour guides for David Dewhurst and me, joined by designer/staff photographer Sigmar Willnauer (whose leisure activities, as listed on the company rundown, include "inflatable toys"—we didn't ask). Filling out the day's photographic entourage was modelmaker Raymond Gradwohl, whose 600 Ninja bears the inevitable scars left by someone who's genuinely fast, but hasn't yet learned just *how* fast.

Likewise, the motorcycling public has yet to figure out just who these guys are. Depending on the final disposition of the Frog 750, frogdesign might go from being one of the foremost industrial-design studios in the world, to one of the foremost *motorcycle*-design studios in the world.

—Jim Miller

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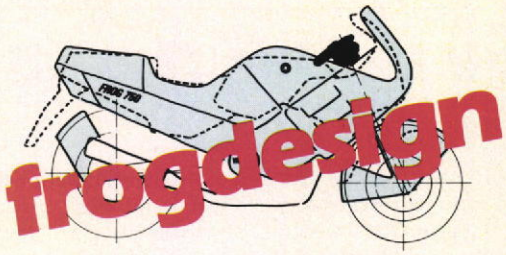
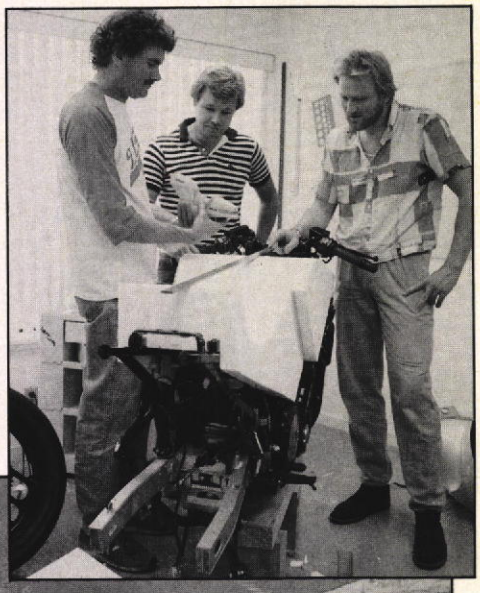
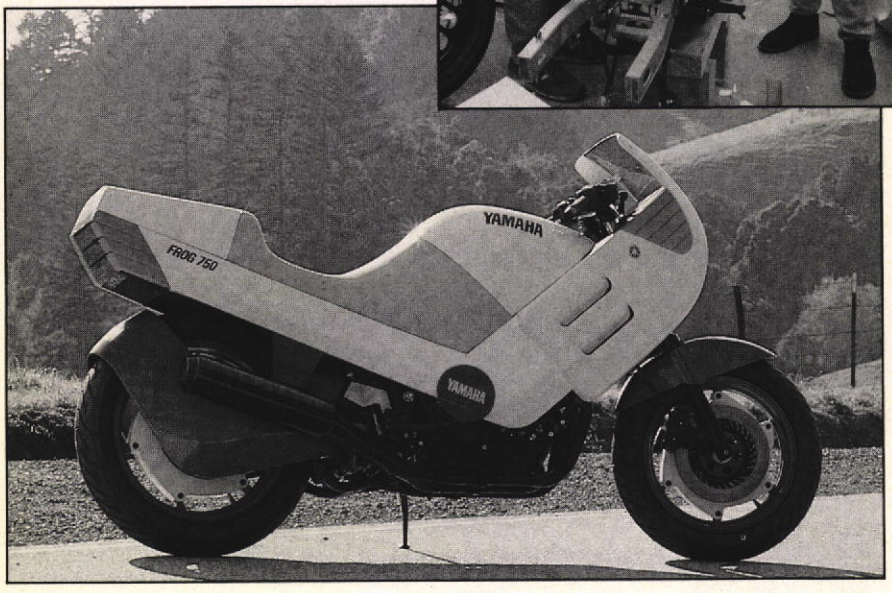
Teschner, Willnauer, Esslinger and Gradwohl (l. to r.) with Frog 750

Poised for a leap into the future.







Mercedes-Benz automobiles. This construction, he contends, provides a high-quality finish that can resist damage from minor incidents such as parking lot tipovers.

Don't hold your breath waiting for those klutz-accommodating bodypanels, though, because of all the items on the Frog 750, those seem the least likely to see the light of a production line, at least at any time in the near future. Esslinger notes that motorcyclists tend to be conservative in their tastes, which is one of the major reasons most motorcycles still cling to the exposed (at least partially) engine, something automobiles gave up about the same time they lost wooden wheels. That same thinking prevented him from incorporating other items into the Frog, such as a fully hidden exhaust system.

The other features frogdesign did incorporate, however, reflect a genuine concern with the practicalities of motorcycling. And that concern is the Frog's greatest asset, because it means the bike might be only a year or so from a production line. Apparently, the bike received a favorable response in Europe, and pending the response in the United States, might well make it into production for 1988. Currently, though, there's only one medium being used to showcase the bike in this country: You're looking at it. •

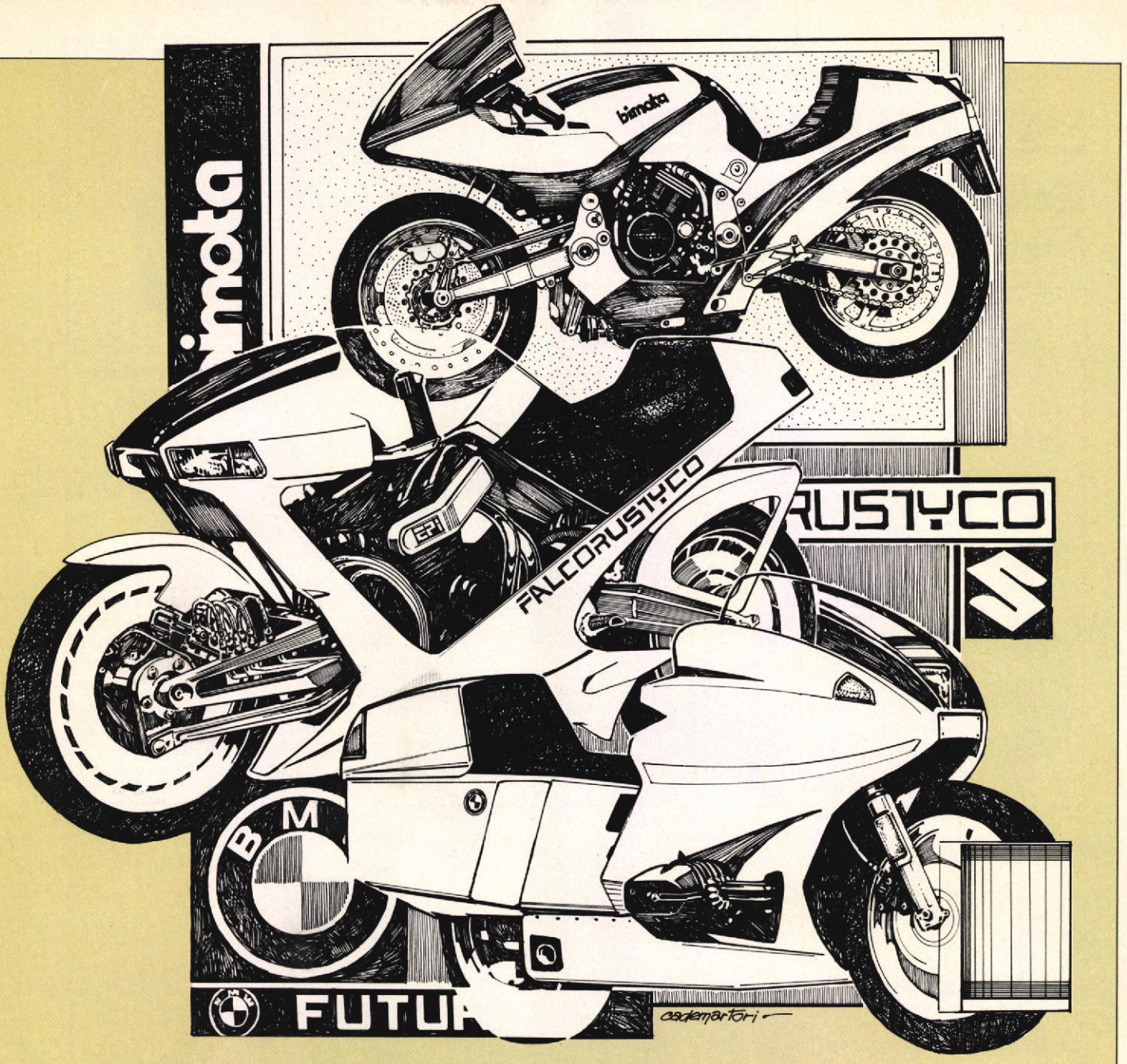
Looking Back At The Future

And at a very uncertain showbike-to-showroom connection.

• Showbikes. Rarely do they find their way into production intact. Most often it's the individual parts or systems or *concepts* of the factory showbike that end up on the showroom floor, not the entire machine. That should come as no suprise: Showbikes, after all, are more test beds for new ideas than prototypes for next year's production. There are exceptions, of course, but they're just that—exceptions. If one year's showbike turns up in next year's model line, you can bet the bike was primarily an exercise in styling, not mechanics. The radically different powertrains, the all-new chassis designs, the suspension systems or even the wheel-and-tire combinations debuted on a showbike are really a manufacturer's multidimensional statement of where it *might* want to be with its machines in the future. And the emphasis here is decidely on the qualifier, "might."

Consider BMW's showbike of six years ago, the boxer-twin-powered Futuro. In 1980, BMW, well aware of the ground it had lost to the Japanese, was equally aware that something new was needed. So, working under contract from Munich headquarters, b&b, a Frankfurt-based style and engineering think tank, developed the showbike Futuro. This machine was a blend of existing and classic BMW technology with styling and additional mechanical treatments completely new to the company. Starting with a clean sheet of paper, b&b based the Futuro on a frame unlike any other then in the Beemer line. The engine, strengthened with cast-in ribs, became a stressed member, while the BMW-standard twin rear shocks gave way to a monoshock system with a floating rear-drive hub and a gas-charged Bilstein as the suspension element. The most conventional part of the Futuro underpinning was its front suspension, a fork lifted straight off an R65, albeit modified with titanium springs. Spinning in that fork was an aerodynamically slick aluminum disc wheel, meant not only to reduce wind drag but to cut weight. A matching disc wheel was employed out back.

This showbike's power was generated by a turbocharged, fuel-injected 880cc



opposed-twin. Carbon-fiber reinforced bodywork concealed most of the power package, indeed, most of the bike's mechanical parts. In truth, the Futuro's extended tail became necessary to counteract sidewind stability problems caused by those showbike solid-disc wheels. Which might be a clue as to why the Futuro never went any further than the showbike stage. Apparently, this bike wasn't an eloquent enough expression of where BMW hoped to be. When the company's new-design bikes did debut, they weren't powered by opposed twins, weren't turbocharged, didn't have disc wheels, didn't even have the Futuro's unusual rear suspension. In fact, the K-series BMW retained only one system on the Futuro: fuel-injection.

Two other showbike exercises of the more recent past, Bimota's Tesi of '84 and the Suzuki FalcoRustyco from this year's Tokyo show, were even greater departures from the motorcycling norm. And for that very reason it's unlikely either will become production reality, at least in its entirety. Hub-center steering, hydraulically actuated on both of these bikes, offers undeniable benefits, including anti-dive during braking, as well as lower steering inertia and a dramatic reduction of suspension friction over a telescopic fork. But while this style of steering has been used on a number of showbikes, indeed even some racebikes, the system has yet to make it to the production line. The Tesi's carbon-fiber/Kevlar monocoque tub frame is yet another example of showbike futurethink that, from a production standpoint, has remained just that—futurethink. And the FalcoRustyco's complete elimination of foot controls, its variable-ratio fluid drive, its very *look*, all point to the showbike as test bed, not prototype.

But what of the exceptions, the showstoppers that become reality? Look no further than Suzuki again. But look no further than styling changes, either. Think back to 1980 and to a showbike that seemed far too radical to be mass produced. It was called the Katana. And it was, of course, more a styling exercise than mechanical departure. It also reached production the very next year.

What, then, might we expect from this Frogdesign Yamaha, the latest showbike spotlighted on the pedestal? Look to the past. Which type of showbike becomes reality, the mechanical concept or the styling exercise? And which category does this Yamaha best fit into? Just answer that question. —*Joe Kress*

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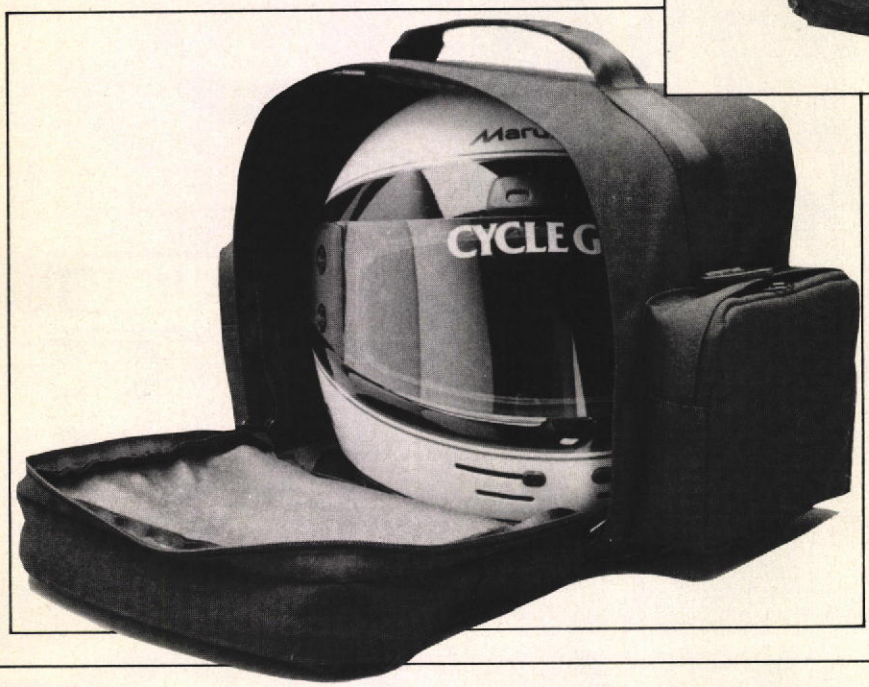
PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Eclipse Fast Pack

Back on the saddle again.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 ANDREA KING



Small pockets hold your ascot and gloves

With room left over for your top hat.

• Motorcycle soft luggage has really come of age: Within this genre, you can find containers designed for just about any purpose. And of all those styles, tail bags—soft luggage designed to bungee onto the passenger portion of a bike's saddle—are some of the most convenient, simply because they provide a reasonable amount of carrying space, attach quickly and fit a wide variety of bikes. The most recent variation on this theme is the Fast Pack, from Eclipse.

Like several other tail bags, the Fast Pack is made of 1000-denier Cordura, with a layer of water-resistant coating on

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the inner surfaces. The heart of the Eclipse pack is its 11″ X 9″ X 9″ main compartment, one panel of which opens with a three-sided YKK zipper. In addition, two smaller pockets, one on each side, flank the main compartment, and a large pocket is stitched to the rear of the bag. The Fast Pack's mounting system consists of one continuous bungee cord inserted flat into the bottom portion of the bag, and exposed along the bag's sides. Mounted to this bungee are four S-hooks, two on each side, for securing the bag to the bike. In addition to the unusual mounting system, Eclipse supplies removable plastic stiffeners to help keep the pack from deflating when empty, even though the Fast Pack's thick Cordura is stiff enough to retain some shape when the bag is empty.

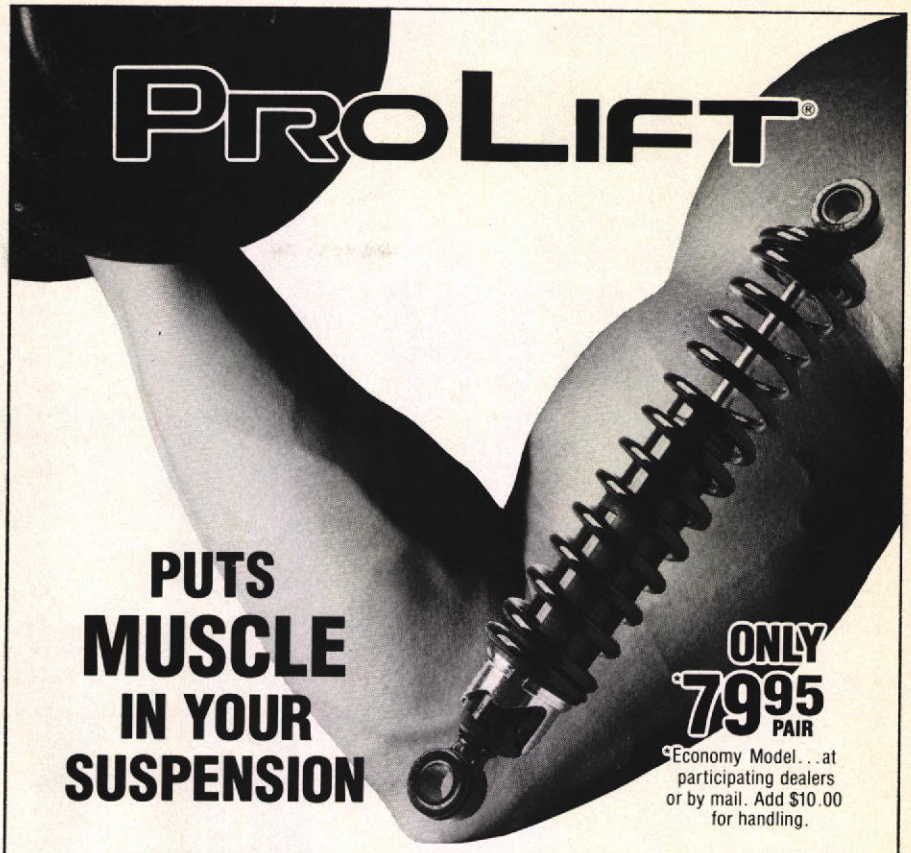
Nevertheless, the Fast Pack is at its best when full, because its greatest assets are its capacious storage and easily accessible exterior pockets. The main compartment is large enough to hold a full-coverage helmet or a weekend's worth of gear. Add to that the two 7″ X 6″ X 2″ side pockets that can provide room to carry tools and often forgotten last-minute items. All together, the Fast Pack's nooks and crannies offer a claimed 1250 cubic inches of storage, more than most tail bags on the market.

While most riders will appreciate the bag's generous capacity, its mounting system won't win such favorable reviews. Though the single-bungee system works well at holding the bag securely to the seat, the heavy-duty bungee cord makes pulling the hooks to the frame rails or tie down hooks difficult. That's especially true for bikes with frame rails far below the bottom of the seat. Moreover, the bag's S-hooks are bent in such a way that they tend to rub sidepanels on many bikes.

But the Fast Pack's mounting system proves to be the bag's only serious shortcoming: Otherwise, the pack is nicely finished and comes with a complete array of standard equipment, including the plastic stiffeners, a rain cover and an extra-long, adjustable shoulder strap. And while there's nothing revolutionary about the Fast Pack, it does provide a noticeably larger carrying capacity than most tail bags. And that in itself makes the Fast Pack worth considering.

—Bill Wolf

Eclipse Fast Pack
Manufacturer: Eclipse Inc., P.O. Box 7370, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107
Available color: black only
Suggested retail price: $74.98



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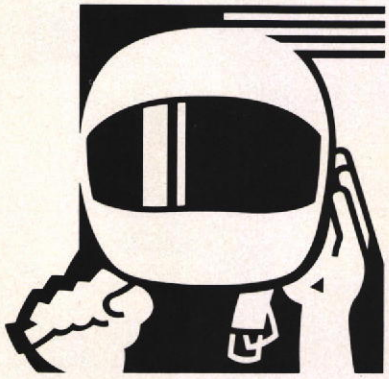
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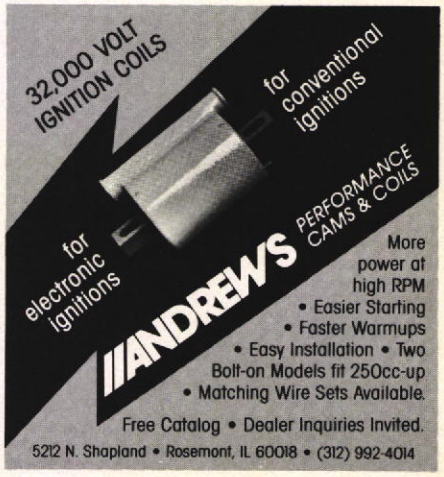
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GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY LARRY WORKS

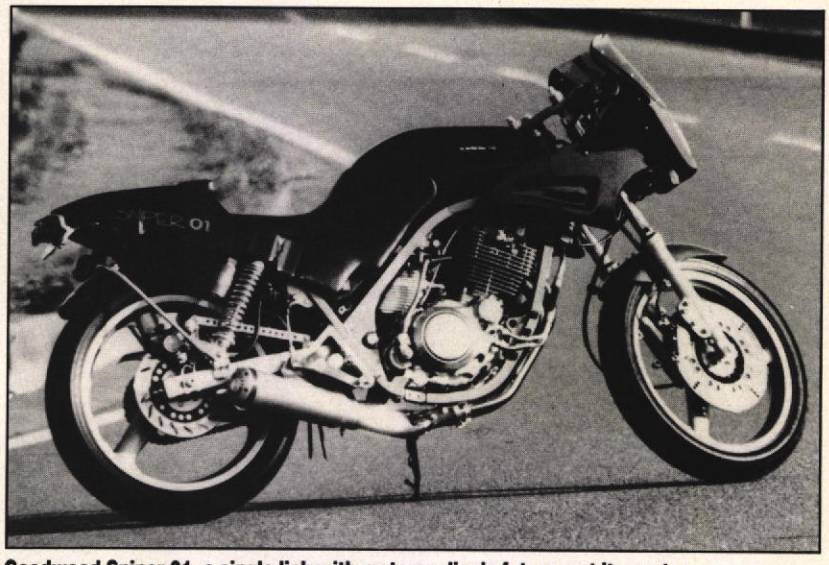
COMING SOON

• Custom versions of four-stroke singles are nothing new; in fact the motomarket abounds with thumpers that have been tucked, trimmed and reshaped to resemble comfortable cliches from the early '60s. Lately, however, there's been real rebirth of interest in the genre, and a few custom firms apparently have discovered that the street single has more to offer than simple tradition. With that discovery, the aftermarket effort has shifted from cosmetic facelifts to enhancing the natural attributes of the modern thumper.

That being the case, it's no wonder Yamaha's new SRX barely made it out of the crate before the customizers descended on it. One of the first results of that aftermarket assault is the Sniper 01, built by Goodwood, a Japanese firm. The complete conversion is more than skin-deep; it includes fenders, tank/seat units, a frame-mounted half-fairing, rearsets, Marvic three-spoke wheels, Brembo discs and a SuperTrapp exhaust. The Sniper also features the rider's choice of Tommaselli or Magura controls, as well as an oil temperature gauge and air-assisted fork. And all things considered, the thoroughly modern Sniper is obviously a view of the singles scene as it is, not as it was.

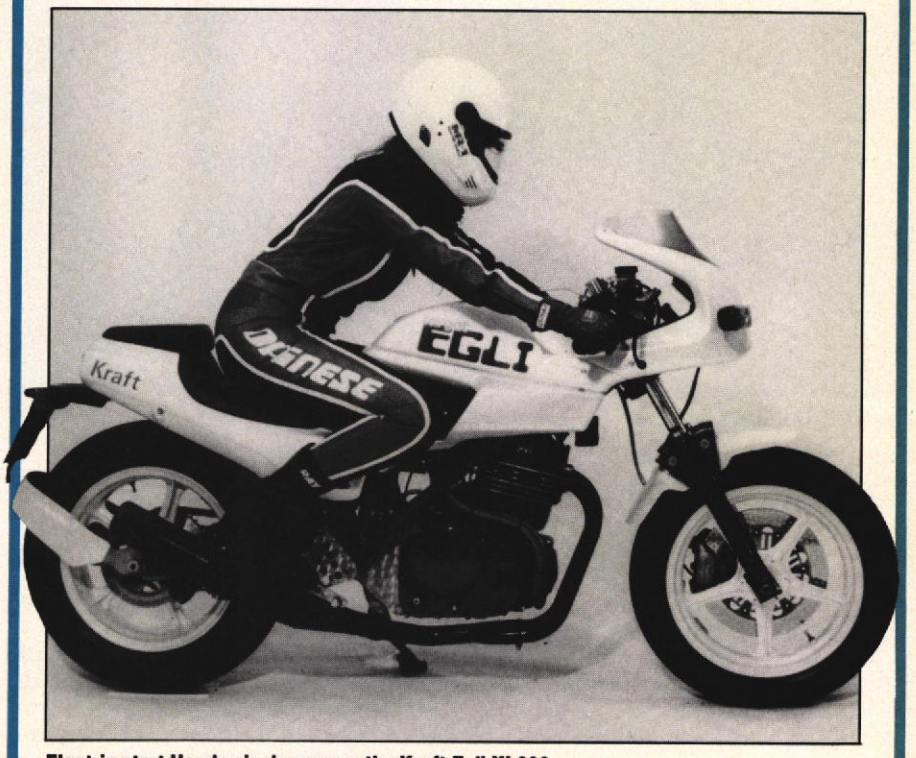
• The remarkable thing about good ideas is how they inspire synchronicity, and the less-is-more appeal of a light, slender streetbike has brought a new wave of thumper fanatics to the fore. Among them is framebuilder Fritz Egli. Egli didn't just discover the inherent virtue of the thumper, though; he designed a frame kit for four-stroke singles years ago. Now, however, his West German importer Reinhold Kraft has modified that kit to produce his own version of the One True One-Lunger, the XL600 Kraft-Egli. The machine is built on the Egli frame, replete with a Brembo four-pot floating-disc front brake. Engine and frame are done up in blood-red lacquer— virtually an Egli trademark—with the rest of the bodywork in mother-of-pearl white. And shoehorned into the Egli frame production is an XL600 engine, fitted with an electric starter.

• For the moment, the motive power behind the street thumper expansion is likely to come from the off-road contingent. Until all the major motomanufacturers gear up for single-cylinder streetbikes, which shouldn't be long (see Rumors, page 36), the aftermarket custom firms will have to use off-road or dual-purpose motors—like the Egli's XL engine—to power their



Goodwood Sniper 01, a single link with motorcycling's future, not its past

Taking deliberate aim at a new generation of would-be thumper fanatics.



Electric-start Honda single powers the Kraft-Egli XL600

The benefits of simple motorcycles power the reborn thumper movement.

Continued

Swiss-made Oemil 1000 treads a fine line between motorcycle and automobile

Do high-back seats, air-conditioning and seatbelts really belong on two wheels?

Lineage of LSL Motorradtechnik's High Heeler isn't hard to trace

But if rumors pan out, this won't be the sole KLR-based street single.

creations. And, as the Kraft-Egli XL demonstrates, a knobby-tire background need not show in the final product. But it can, as LSL Motorradtechnik's new 600 High Heeler clearly shows. This long-suspension hybrid, its beard cowling and alloy wheels notwithstanding, still clearly shows its KLR600 heritage.

• The High Heeler seems to represent one extreme of aftermarket conversion. For the other other end of the spectrum, you need look no further than the Swiss-made Oemil 1000. Peraves AG is developing the machine, which has a full-enclosure body of fiberglass, Kevlar and carbon fiber covering a steel roll cage. Both rider and passenger enter the bike through a center-mounted door while a pair of electrically operated stabilizer wheels keep the machine upright; a luggage space (read: trunk) sits behind the passenger and above the rear-mounted engine.

Despite its unusual looks, the Oemil runs many standard BMW K100 components, including its front and rear suspension. The engine is from a K100, too, though modified with a foot-operated clutch and a gearbox with four forward gears plus reverse. A foot-operated brake pedal actuates the machine's unified brake system, which includes both an anti-

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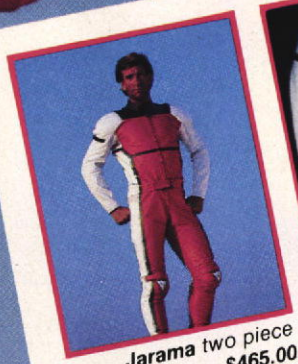

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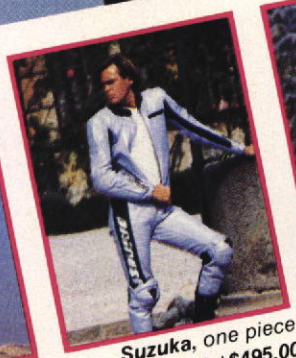

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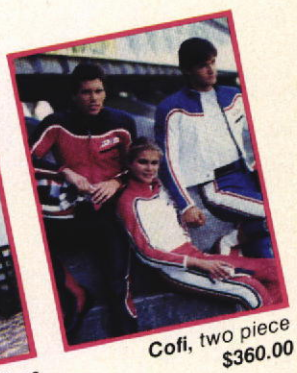

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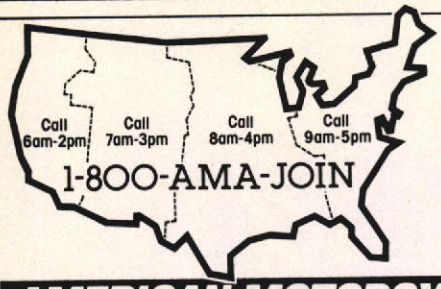

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FEDERAL CASES

• As has been the case for the past year or more, the weakening support for the national speed limit continues as a focal point of national attention. Chinks in the armor of the Double Nickel continue to appear, with any major action waiting, apparently, for a majority of states to go on record as opposing the federally imposed 55-mph highway speed limit. Last month, we reported on campaigns against the Double Nickel in Arizona, Montana and Oregon. Now it seems as if California has joined the growing list of states in opposition to federal policy. A recent joint report issued by the California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Transportation has recommended that the speed limit on hundreds of miles of California freeways be raised to 65 mph. The report further stated that increasing the speed limit outside of metropolitan areas for vehicles other than trucks would have little significant effect on accident statistics, and would allow police to focus attention on more-pressing urban traffic problems.

• Like the question of a national speed limit, helmet use has continued to be a hotbed of legislative action. But for all the public-awareness programs that have been suggested and enacted, and despite all the penalties that have been imposed for non-compliance with state helmet laws, the helmet question remains a burning issue. Perhaps that's because no U.S. legislators have yet suggested the helmet-use inducement that's currently in use in some sections of France: greed. French officials in certain areas have abandoned fining riders without helmets. Instead, they occasionally award courteous riders an official check for about $100. The enticement to wear a helmet comes in that only helmeted riders are eligible for the award. Apparently, the thinking is that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

• Finally, as you can see by the coverage in Sport Lines, Daytona Cycle Week has come and gone once again. And with its passing went the time-honored tradition of midnight rides on the beach. New legislation outlawed all vehicular traffic on the beach there from one hour after sunset until sunrise. Also, reports from the Sunshine State indicate that other measures should preclude the annual hijinks from being shifted up or down the coast. Reportedly, a new Florida law allows municipalities to be sued for vehicular accidents on the beach. As a result, towns fronting the beach north and south of Daytona have outlawed vehicles on the beach except for parking.

Continued

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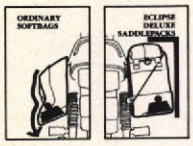

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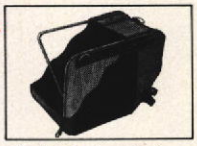

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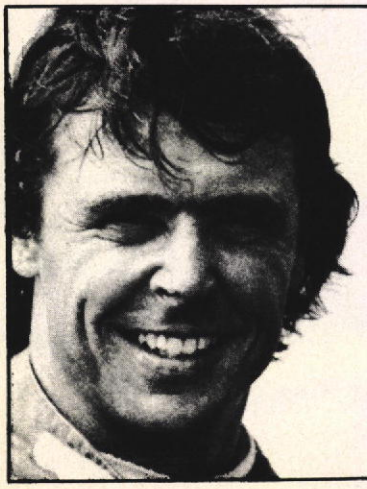

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RUMORS

• It's been said—and rightly so—that there's nothing new under the sun. Nowhere is that adage truer than in the area of rumors. Even the juiciest backroom gossip usually concerns small changes, new displacements and cosmetic overhauls of current models. The practicalities of Father Physics and production reality almost always limit next year's new model line to refinements and variations on existing themes. With that in mind, this month's lead tidbit should come as no great surprise. The straightest—and most often repeated—line on '87 hardware is that Kawasaki's 1000 Concours is sure to produce considerable fallout. It took almost no time at all after the warm reception of that sport-touring adaptation of the 1000 Ninja to generate the story of an '87 follow-up. As this story goes, Kawasaki will apply much the same treatment to its 600 Ninja, producing what might be the *ne plus ultra* of personal-size sport-tourers. And the *might* is pivotal to this story, because if even half of the related rumors pan out, the downsized Concours will have plenty of competition to contend with.

• One of those related rumors—at least, related by virtue of having the 1000R as its starting point—is that a 750 version of that Ninja's liquid-cooled, 16-valve inline-four will find its way into an '87 sportbike. The talk is lent almost rock-solid support by much-discussed, occasionally denied reports that Kawasaki will re-enter Superbike racing.

• Another step in the '87 displacement shuffle is said to be a 50cc boost for the KLR600. This shred of gossamer gains a bit of substance through otherwise unrelated reports that Kawasaki intends to place a liquid-cooled 650 single into Paris-Dakar contention. Finally, overseas sources report that the SRX Yamaha/XBR Honda thumper war is about to heat up dramatically, not only with a new Suzuki street single (Rumors, May 1986) but with an all-street Kawasaki thumper.

• Further talk from across the Atlantic is that the rumored 680 Gamma (Rumors, May 1986) is far closer to production than was originally suspected. Well-placed sources report that the 185-mph, 125-plus horsepower sportbike will be unveiled at the Cologne Show in September.

• Other idle chatter about Suzuki is that the firm's already extensive line of four-wheelers will have a new flagship by late summer. Reports from someone monitoring secluded off-road areas with long lenses is that Suzuki is readying a half-liter counterpunch to Honda's 250R FourTrax. Our man with the binocular-assisted vision reports that a 500cc liquid-cooled Quadracer is very nearly ready, which would up the four-wheeler displacement ante considerably.

• In another tale of a reponse to a Honda incursion, there's the talk that Harley-Davidson is working on a replacement for its Honda-eclipsed XR750 dirttrack engine. Sources close to the project (and too close to a parabolic reflector) are whispering about an eight-valve vee-twin,

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• One last item this month concerns another new engine, though one that has its beginnings in the automotive world. Maserati recently announced a new motor design, one with six valves per cylinder. So why should Maserati's new motor be linked with wild tales of motorcycle futures? The answer is as simple as Maserati's connection with Benelli and Moto Guzzi via Alesandro de Tomaso. Now add to that the fact that Maserati engineers reportedly are working with Moto Guzzi on a new liquid-cooled three-cylinder engine—with an indeterminate number of valves per cylinder. Any takers on the valve count for Guzzi's new triple?

HARD CASH

• In a move that caught most motorcycle industry insiders flat-footed, Cagiva Motor Italia, the fifth-largest motorcycle company, recently bought out Husqvarna Motorcycle Co. The purchase, according to Cagiva spokesmen, will provide Husqvarna sufficient capital to step up its R&D programs (see "Positive PROOF," March 1986 issue), while keeping ". . . any portion of the European motorcycle industry from coming under the control of a Japanese company." Just what effect the purchase will have on the long-range plans of either Husqvarna or Cagiva is uncertain, but at least for the moment the situation will remain business as usual; Husqvarnas will continue to be built in Sweden, with Cagiva production remaining in Italy.

• The effect of Kawasaki's involvement in AMA dragracing, however, should be felt immediately. Kawasaki contributed $9000 to the AMA-sanctioned straightline racing, with $1000 going to each of the winners of nine separate quarter-mile categories.

• Those first two items are just fine for moto-industry moguls and holeshot hotshots, but they have little or no direct influence on the average motorcyclist. However, Interlube, distributor of Optimol four-stroke motorcycle oil, might have something of interest for the rest of us. As a promotion of Optimol oil, Interlube will double the engine warranty on any motorcycle that's run exclusively on Optimol throughout its entire warranty period. Full details on the Double Warranty Program can be obtained by writing Interlube International, Inc., Dept. CG, 1640 Peace Portal Drive, Blaine, Washington 98230, or by calling (206) 332-4260.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• To most riders, the letters IDBA designate the International Drag Bike Association. But stuntman Bob Duffey isn't most riders, and to him, the letters might just as well mean I Dragrace BassAckwards. Duffey set his mind to riding a Kawasaki Eliminator through the quarter-mile—seated backwards—at 100 mph or better (Apart From The Crowd, October

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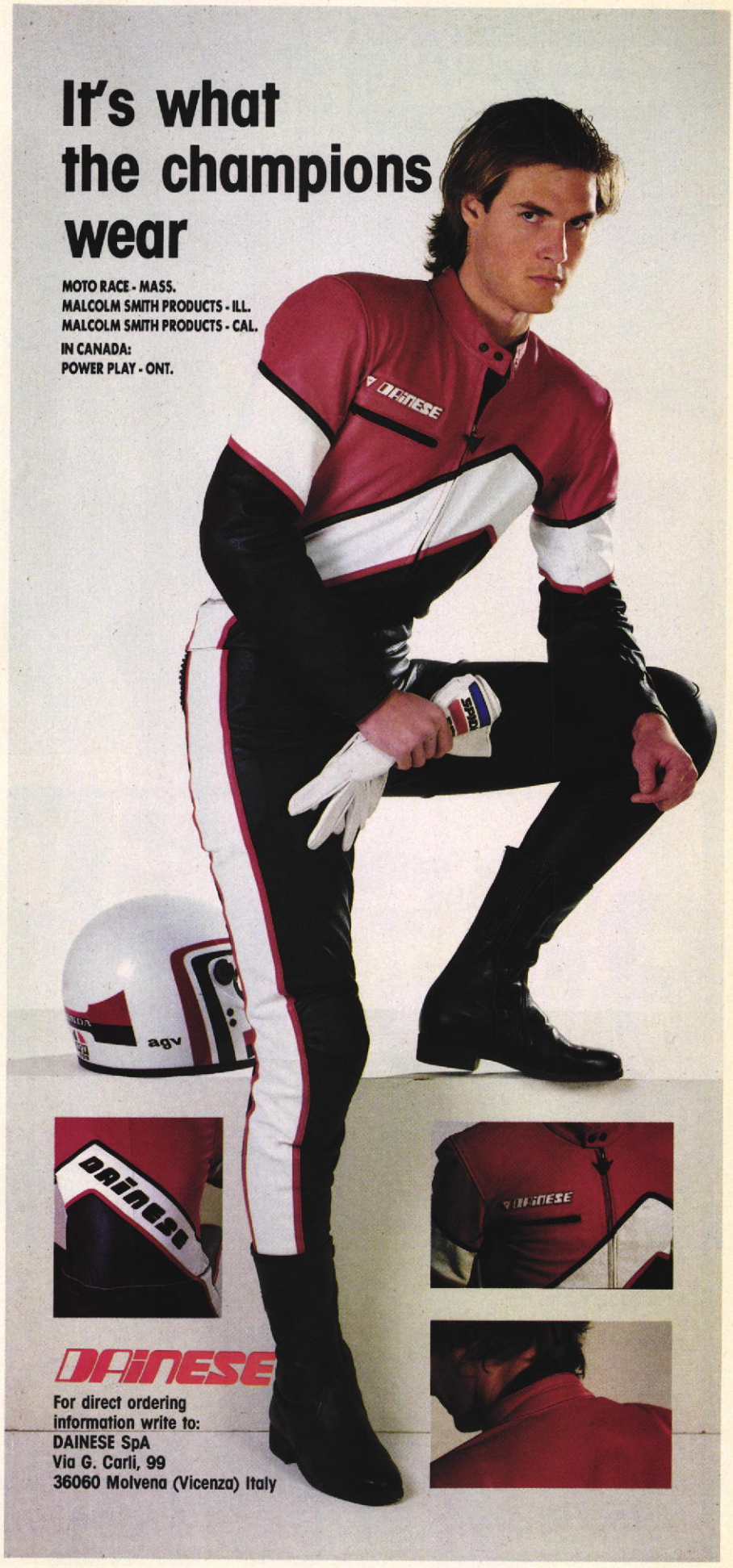

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1985). And when Duffey sets his mind on a goal, no one better stand in his way—whether that's in front or behind him. At an IDBA meet in Gulfport, Mississippi, Duffey exceeded his goal, with a 12.99/107.52 quarter-mile while facing the crowd. The feat undoubtedly caused quite a stir in the bleacher seats, but for Duffey it was old hat. Two months before, he had put in a 12.47/122.11 run on a borrowed 1979 Kawasaki Z1-R Turbo. All of which should give new meaning to *turning* a quarter-mile.

• Seems like no one's content just to *ride* a motorcycle anymore. In addition to Wrong-Way Duffey's straightline prowess, there's a stunt by the self-proclaimed World's Strongest Man to consider. Strongman John Wooten laid claim to his title by lying on a bed of nails with a ramp positioned on his chest. He might well have nailed down the title when during the act's finale a motorcycle and rider jumped the ramp at 50 mph.

• Such an act might well be hard to duplicate, but the same can't be said of classic motorcycles. Take, for example, the Chinese-made 250cc Xing-Fu, said to look almost more like a Jawa/CZ than the original. There's even a chance you might be able to make the comparison yourself; the Xing-Fu, reportedly one of the least-expensive two-stroke 250s on the world motomarket today, is said to be making inroads into the British market, with overseas expansion possible.

• If a Chinese reproduction of a Czech two-stroke doesn't get you going, how about an authentic Chinese Britbike? To satisfy that particular itch, there's the Donhai, a near bolt-for-bolt replica of a BSA A-10, though in a 750cc displacement. If such hardware seems a shade dated, consider that there's a reported seven-year waiting list to get a motorcycle in China. So, if you were to put in your order for a front-line sportbike right now, it might seem as dated as the Donhai by the time it arrived.

• While you're still in the time warp, consider the Rajdoot 350, made under license in India. You can't quite picture the bike? Sure you can; countless thousands of them used to wheelie away from stoplights all over the U.S., clouds of two-stroke exhaust billowing in their wake. Of course, you probably called them by the name Yamaha did: RD350. And if you strip the Rajdoot logo from that Indian-made 350, that's exactly what you'd have, a perfect mid-'70s RD350.

• And as proof that Italobikes aren't impervious to cloning, note this pair of *faux* Continental classics produced by the German firm Motorrad Italia. The replica Ducati 1000 SS Imola began as a 1000 S2, then was transformed via a replica 25-liter tank, seat, fairing and wire wheels. And lest you think the Motorrad Italia 850 Le Mans C is any more authentic, underneath the cosmetics lie the mechanicals of a T5 Moto Guzzi.

All these replicas and renditions of well-known bikes are fascinating, certainly, but where will it all end? How long before some enterprising soul turns his talents to reproduc-

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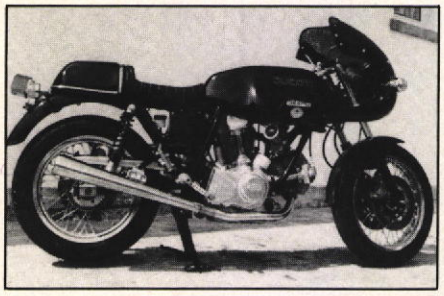
Motorrad Italia, moto-forgeries to go

To some, it's art by the pound.



ing mainstream motorcycles? Can the day of the replica '83 Virago or '85 Interceptor be far off? We can only hope.

• The mania for motorcycle replicas even stretches beyond the two-wheeled reproductions. For instance, there's a new accessory offered by the ever-prolific Harley-Davidson parts and accessories division. It's a flip-open touch-tone telephone shaped and decorated to look precisely like a can of Harley-Davidson beer. You can file this item under This One's For You.

AFTER THE FACT

• Lord Hesketh's pet project, the Hesketh V1000 (November 1983), has been a news item of such recurrence that by now it probably deserves a column all its own. Or, more likely, an issue devoted solely to its coverage. In one of the earlier installments of the continuing saga, the twin-cam vee-twin was to have been revived in the guise of something a bit sportier than its original incarnation. The much-ballyhooed resurrection was to have included a horsepower boost of nearly 30 percent, as well as a lightweight Moto Martin frame. Those plans are now said to be on hold, however. Indecision over whether to offer the bike as a high-ticket GT "classic" or to put it head-to-head against modern literbikes reportedly has shelved the project, at least temporarily.

• And another British comeback apparently has found its way to the slow lane, at least for the U.S. market. The L.F. Harris Ltd.-revived Triumph Bonneville (see October 1985) reportedly has run into unexpected problems, and might not make it to the United States. Overseas reports indicate that concerns over liability insurance have, for the moment, anyway, halted sale of the bike to American Triumph dealers. •

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ROAD TEST:

Honda VFR750F Interceptor

What to do for an encore.

BY MARC COOK

Don't look now, but Honda is writing its own script again. Just when the 750 sportbike stage has been filled with high-tech, take-no-prisoners, narrow-focus hardware, Honda ushers out the VFR750 Interceptor. Naturally, Honda says the new three-quarter-liter Interceptor steps through the curtain ready to take on the heavy-hitters in the class, specifically, Yamaha's FZ750 and Suzuki's GSX-R750. The VFR gets supported in this role with a playbill-full of racing-derived pieces, including a 105-claimed-horsepower, 16-valve vee-four powerplant, and a cast-and extruded-aluminum frame.

At the same time, Honda has complicated the VFR's billing by giving the bike a dual role: Honda intends the VFR to be a

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 DAVID DEWHURST

INTERCEPTOR
RF-5V
FR
750

civilized, livable day-to-day motorcycle as well as a front-line sportbike. And if that sounds like an impossible scenario, think back to the first Honda VF750F Interceptor. That bike took its turn in the spotlight during the '83 season because it was a nothing short of a breakthrough motorcycle: The VF750F not only outhandled, out-accelerated and generally out-*did* its 750-class competition, it also provided uncommon versatility and comfort for a sportbike.

Honda wanted the new VFR to keep that style of sporting competence and comfort. Yet the similarity of intent is one of the few items the new Interceptor shares with its pedecessor. And concerning themselves with the VFR's sporting role, Honda engineers attacked one of the few chinks in the old Interceptor's armor: weight. At 476 pounds, the VFR is 36 pounds lighter than the old bike—which slots the new Interceptor between the 437-pound GSX-R750 and the 494-pound FZ750. While most of the weight savings came from the bike's chassis—its aluminum frame and lighter wheels, for example—a substantial amount came from within the vee-four powerplant.

What hasn't been overhauled from previous Interceptors is the VFR's seamless power delivery. Like the Interceptors before it, the VFR's powerplant produces usable power from scarcely above idle, and it doesn't slack off until past its 11,500-rpm redline. That mile-wide spread of power makes hustling the VFR down a backroad as easy as erring on your tax return. What's more, with an effective 10,500-rpm-wide powerband to work with, there's little need to attend to the slick-shifting, close-ratio six-speed gearbox during those canyon-strafing sessions.

In addition to that impressively wide powerband, the VFR packs a serious top-end punch—enough to push it to a top speed of 144 mph. To begin with the new vee-four has noticeably less flywheel effect than the previous 750 Interceptor, making the engine feel more lively and willing to rev. And while the earlier Interceptor plowed through its rev range practically without changing exhaust note, the VFR emits a rumbling growl—sounding much like a downsized Yamaha V-Max—that increases in intensity as the revs rise. But the new Interceptor's motor is more than just sound and fury: At the dragstrip, the VFR lunged through the quarter-mile in 11.407 seconds at 120.47 mph, nearly a half-second quicker than the last VF750F we tested, which posted a 11.890-second/114.64-mph run. And while the VFR's elapsed time falls 0.02 second short of the Yamaha's FZ750, the Honda's terminal speed—a good indication of peak horsepower—betters the Yamaha's by 2 mph.

Honda got that peak horsepower through a program aimed at increasing the motor's high-rpm breathing potential. To that end, the VFR has 1mm larger intake valves, a larger airbox and 1mm larger carburetors as compared to the VF-F. In addition, Honda reworked the entire intake system to provide the fuel charge a straighter shot into the cylinders. To complement that and the other intake changes, Honda opened up the exhaust side as well. This change required more than just a new exhaust system: In place of the old bike's 360-degree crankshaft, the VFR carries a crank with the cylinder pairs' throws 180 degrees apart. Such a setup lets Honda use a four-into-two exhaust system that permits more efficient exhaust scavenging than was possible with the 360-degree crank. And to make sure camshaft timing would remain accurate up to the VFR's 11,500-rpm redline, a VF1000R-style gear-drive arrangement replaces the VF-F's link-plate chain.

And Honda's reworking of the vee-four

powerplant achieved precisely what the engineers wanted. The motor's peak horsepower has been boosted substantially, yet the wide torque curve and impeccable power delivery of the VF750F have been left intact. Just as important, Honda says, is that a substantial amount of fat has been trimmed from the liquid-cooled motor, which helps contribute to the VFR's light weight.

Even so, it's the VFR's all-new chassis that shaves the most weight from the bike. In place of the VF750F's rectangular-section steel frame, the VFR uses two enormous box-section aluminum main spars that mate to aluminum castings at the swingarm pivot and the steering head. This frame helps shrink the Interceptor's size, as well: The wheelbase is nearly 2 inches shorter and the steering head angle has been tucked in one-half degree to 27.5. And to dial in an extra measure of stability, the bike's trail figure has grown 12mm to 108mm.

Those chassis special-effects work to make the Interceptor feel exceptionally agile. That's especially apparent on tightly twisted backroads, where the VFR will dive deep into corners with barely more physical effort than it takes to cancel the turnsignals. What's more, the VFR's steering response feels direct and linear—the bike will hold a given line through a corner with just the slightest bit of bar pressure. That trait is especially welcome if you need to use the VFR's stout front brake midturn; the VFR all but refuses to stand up under braking, unlike the VF750F which tended to head for the outside of the corner when the brakes were applied. And for the most part, the VFR's Dunlop tires allow you to enjoy the bike's handling. However, when pushed especially hard into slower corners, occasionally the front end will push. That's not a problem through faster corners, though; the Interceptor stays calm and reassuring well into triple-digit speeds.

Where the VFR runs into trouble is on bumpy, pockmarked roads. Despite pumping the suspension's preload settings close to maximum, the VFR's softly sprung suspension doesn't particularly relish a fast pace on rough roads. Occasionally, the bike will bottom when heeled over, grounding out the exhaust system; otherwise, nothing else grazed the asphalt during spirited street riding. As part of Honda's desire to lighten the VFR, all damping adjusters have been stripped off, and on unruly pavement, access to more rebound damping would be as welcome as beer on a fishing trip. In fact, the only damping adjustment remaining on the VFR is the fork's TRAC anti-dive. The TRAC, when set to its stiffest (No. 4) position, does a respectable job of slowing fork compression during panic stops, and it helps keep the softly sprung fork from slamming to its stops.

Of course, the fork has the odds stacked against it: The VFR's redesigned front disc brake offers enough power to howl the front tire with two fingers on the lever, and it provides more feedback than the Donahue show. The front tire proves to be the limiting factor under hard braking, which helps explain the VFR's 128-foot stopping distance from 60 mph.

But the VFR's braking distances are just a smidgen off the best performance of today's sportbikes, and as such can't detract from the bike's backroad success. And that success is due in no small part to the VFR's stout, viceless engine; overall, the torquey vee-four proves to be as undemanding as an electric motor, even when you're trying to wring every last bhp from it. Moreover, the engine's polished civility only serves to reinforce the fact that Honda wanted the VFR to be as accommodating as it is competent—and as it turns out, the Interceptor's ace in the hole is its versatility.

And it's precisely this versatility that distances the VFR from its 750-class competition. Compared to the racer-clone crouches found on some sportbikes, the VFR's ergonomics are decidedly upright, which helps keep the bike—and its rider—from falling to its knees at the first sight of four-lane highway. Plus, the relatively softly sprung suspension offers an adequate, if not feather-bed ride out in the world of Bott's dots and expansion joints. Even if your idea of daily use doesn't include a freeway ride, you'll find the VFR uncommonly pleasant for a sportbike: The Honda's light steering makes sorting traffic supremely easy. The VFR's engine is also well-suited to day-to-day use: It's respectably smooth—only a slight throb seeps through the unpadded aluminum footpegs—and it possesses good off-idle power and as little driveline lash as a one-speed bicycle.

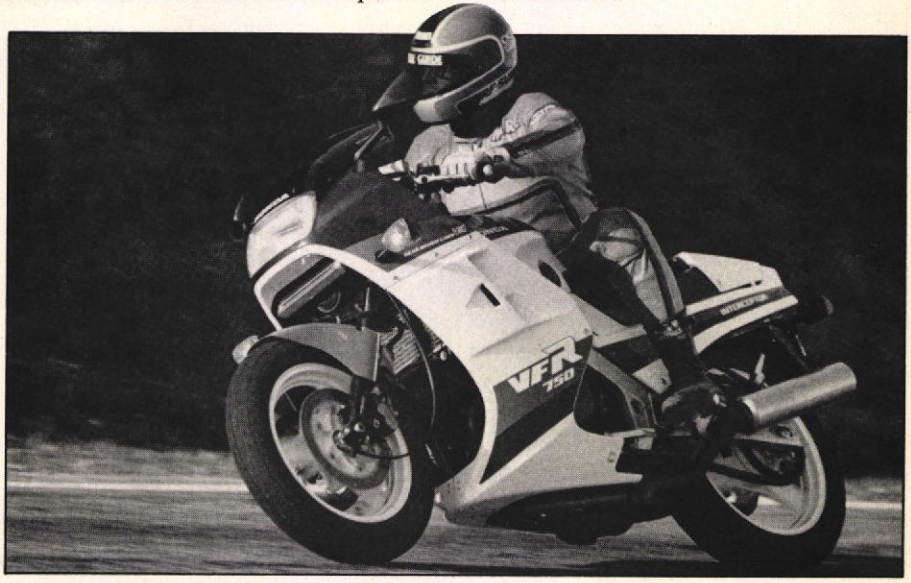
And if you remember the original 750 Interceptor, that kind of versatility sounds plenty familiar. With the VFR, Honda has retained those multi-use traits while also staying abreast of the state-of-the-art in knee-dragging hardware. And while the R most assuredly is up to date in terms of sheer sporting competence, it's also way out ahead of the pack when it comes to civility and commuter-life usefulness. What all this means, of course, is that the 750 Interceptor is back in the limelight, with new lines and a fresh script—and right on cue for a command performance. •

Nits:

- Mirrors provide insufficient view of area directly behind bike.
- No centerstand.
- White wheels are difficult to keep clean.

Picks:

- Extra-large fuel-filler opening allows you to see fuel level easily.
- Thumbwheel adjustments on levers are convenient.
- Dzus fasteners on sidecovers simplify their removal.



Fast and agile VFR excels in its natural backroad habitat.

And combines that sporting ability with comfort others only aspire to.

Ride Review

• Okay, buddy, here's the scoop—but don't tell anyone I told you this: Honda is selling NS400s in America. They've finally found a way to bring this superlative sportbike to our shores without incurring the wrath of the Feds. Honda dealers are part of the scam, too. But play it cool. If you want in on the deal, go to your local Honda shop and ask for—are you sure no one followed you here?—a VFR750.

Honda, of course, denies this story, but I know better. Sure, it's bigger and heavier, and its engine sounds like a four-stroke vee-four, but the VFR handles, steers and stops just like a bike half its size. But what really amazes me is how well Honda disguised the NS under the VFR's bodywork. Because no matter how hard you look at the NS—pardon me, I mean the VFR, all you can see is the best sporting 750 in the world.

—Jerry Smith

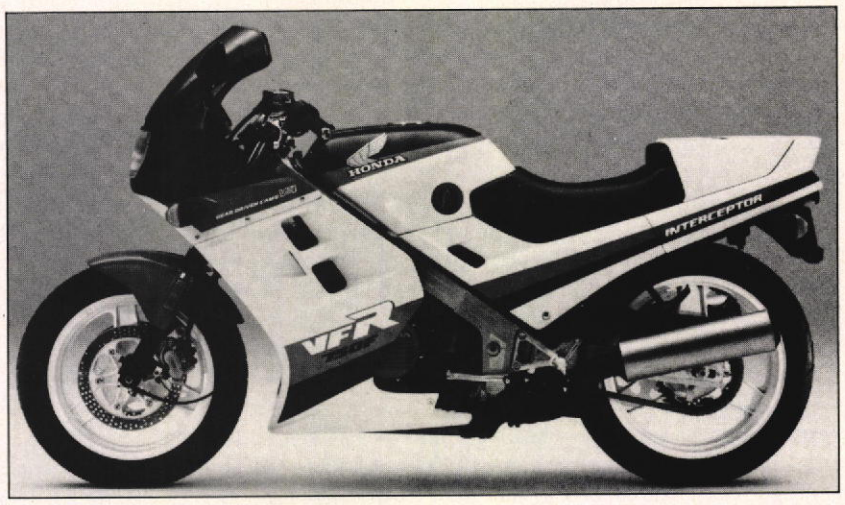
• Yesterday's bikes stir up memories perhaps because they seem so fundamental, products of less complicated times. They simply stuck to the basics of motorcycling's youth. Manufacturers nowadays, though, have headed off into areas of outrageous styling and technological one-upmanship, deemed necessary to keep abreast of each other.

Honda, too, isn't immune from delving into exotic engineering and unusual configurations. In fact, the company spared no expense on the VFR. But in this case, that complexity isn't a hindrance. This bike is one of the best 750cc machines I've ridden; it's light and quick on its feet, and the vee-four engine is faultless. Which just proves to me that motorcycling has, indeed, finally come of age. *—Tim Brodd*

• Somehow, as competent as the bikes were, the original Interceptor formula worked for me only in the half-liter size. The 750's behavior during braking confounded me in corners, and to my mind the 1000F's magic motor couldn't make up for its Frigidaire-class heft. In fact, both of the larger bikes just seemed to be too overweight and ungainly to handle as well as they did, and I was only really comfortable on the 500.

The new improved formula used with the VFR750, however, is another story. This latest solution provides the near-perfect balance that left me lusting for the VF500, then stirs in an additional dollop of handling and horsepower to boot. Yet each time I think about how much I like the new VFR, I can't help but wonder: If the 750 is this good, what could Honda do with a 500? *—Jim Miller*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS



Honda VFR750F — street

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Co. Inc., 100 W. Alondra Blvd., Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: N/A

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke 90 degree tandem vee-four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 70.0mm x 48.6mm
Displacement 748.1cc
Compression ratio 10.5:1
Engine redline . . . . . 11,500 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . four 31mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . 12-volt; 300-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 12-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . straight-cut gears; 1.939:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #530 O-ring chain; 2.813:1 (45/16) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.846	15.524	4.94
II	2.062	11.249	6.82
III	1.631	8.899	8.62
IV	1.333	7.272	10.55
V	1.153	6.293	12.19
VI	1.035	5.649	13.58

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Showa air-spring, 37mm stanchion tube diameter, 4-position adjustable brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.4 in. (134mm)
Rear . . . . . single Showa, 6mm spring preload range adjustable within 14½ turn of adjuster/3.5 in. (88mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.7-in. (272mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 9.8-in. (246mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 110/90-16 V250 Dunlop K155F tubeless
Rear . . . . . 130/80-16 V250 Dunlop K155 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . 476 lbs. (215.9kg)
Weight distribution . . . . 48.3% front, 51.7% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . 853 lbs. (386.9kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 344 lbs. (156.0kg)
Wheelbase . . 58.3 to 59.6 in. (1480 to 1515mm)
Seat height . . . . . 28.6 in. (727mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 25.7 in. (653mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 14.4 in. (326mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 5.6 in. (143mm), exhaust crossover
Steering head angle . . . 27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.25 in. (108mm)
Frame . . . . . box-section and cast aluminum, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 4.2 qt. (4.0/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 5.3 gal. (20.0/), including 0.8 gal. (3.0/) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 33 to 55 mpg (14 to 23 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 42 mpg (18 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 175 to 292 miles (282 to 469km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . 26 to 44 miles (42 to 71km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph ind. . . 28 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph ind. . . 51 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 11.407 sec., 120.48 mph (194 kph)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 144 mph (232 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 31 ft. (9.5m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . 128 ft. (39.0m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: red-white-and-blue

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.
Specifications refer to a California-only model.

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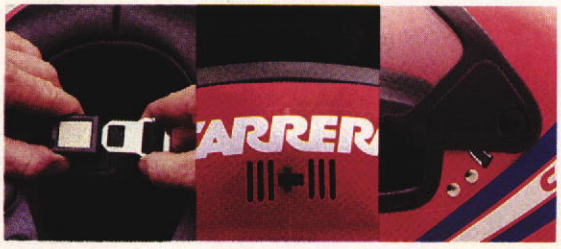

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This helmet reflects the precision German craftsmanship that's made the name **Carrera** synonymous with high quality. Anatomically designed and wind tunnel tested, the **Carrera Le Mans** helmet has been popular with the European motorcycle racing community for some time. The popular **Carrera** is made from one of the "new" synthetics called Polyamide Nylon (superior to Polycarbonate) — a rugged material that's impervious to the effects of gas, brake fluid, solvents or cleaners. Each helmet carries a *full one-year warranty.*

The **Carrera** helmet features an **anti-scratch/anti-fog face shield** (an optional, extra cost item on most other helmets) and patented **Magnetic-track shield closure system,** for greater rider comfort. An adjustable front-to-rear **air ventilation system** and a patented **quick-release chin strap mechanism** that operates with or without gloves on. All this, **plus** vivid contrasting **Carrera Graphics** and plush **brushed-nylon** interior with padded neck roll for secure fit.

JUST HOW GOOD?

Weighing less than many open-faced helmets, the **Carrera Le Mans** is certified to meet or exceed tough U.S. and International government safety standards, including **S.H.C.A.** and **D.O.T.** requirements. It's fully approved for use in **A.M.A.-sanctioned motorcycle competition events.**

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These new **Carrera Le Mans** helmets will not be sold at these prices by this company in any store. To order one, select your size from the chart below, choose color(s) (black, red, white), then write us directly or call our **Toll-Free Hotline** (have your credit card ready).

Carrera Sizing Chart	
Head Measure	Helmet Size
21¼" – 21⅝"	Small
22" – 22½"	Medium
22¾" – 23¼"	Large
23½" – 24⅛"	X-Large

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$69.00* for each helmet you order (Limit 2 per customer/address) **plus $4.90** shipping and handling per helmet ordered. California residents add 6 % sales tax. Please note: **Carrera** helmets are shipped with D.O.T. required **clear shields.** Replacement (anti-fog/anti-scratch) shield in clear or tint only **$12.95.**

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Take Kawasaki's new 454 LTD. It outperforms, outstyles and outclasses every midsize machine on the road. Hands down.

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Kawasaki

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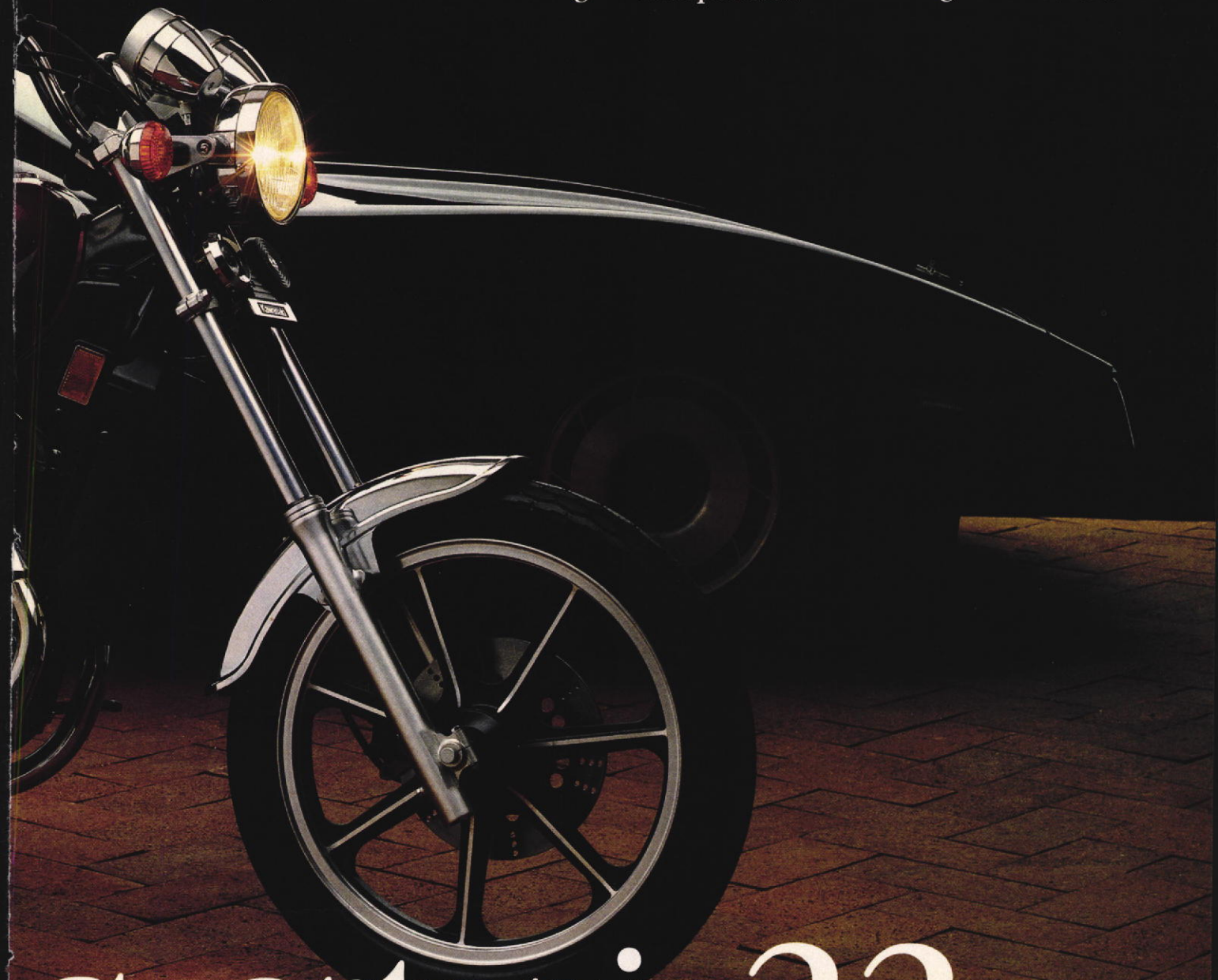

quarter is 2.2 dollar is 27,000

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ROAD TEST:

BMW K75C

It's a family tradition.

BY JERRY SMITH

Each year, many motorcycle manufacturers introduce lineups of all-new bikes, most of which have little in common with the previous year's models. But not BMW: Its philosophy has always been one of gradual change rather than annual obsolescence. BMW's Boxer twins are a perfect example of the company's conservative approach to building motorcycles. Instead of making drastic changes to the flat-twin family of bikes each year, BMW prefers an ongoing program of constant, gradual refinement and maximum parts interchangeability between models. *Continued*

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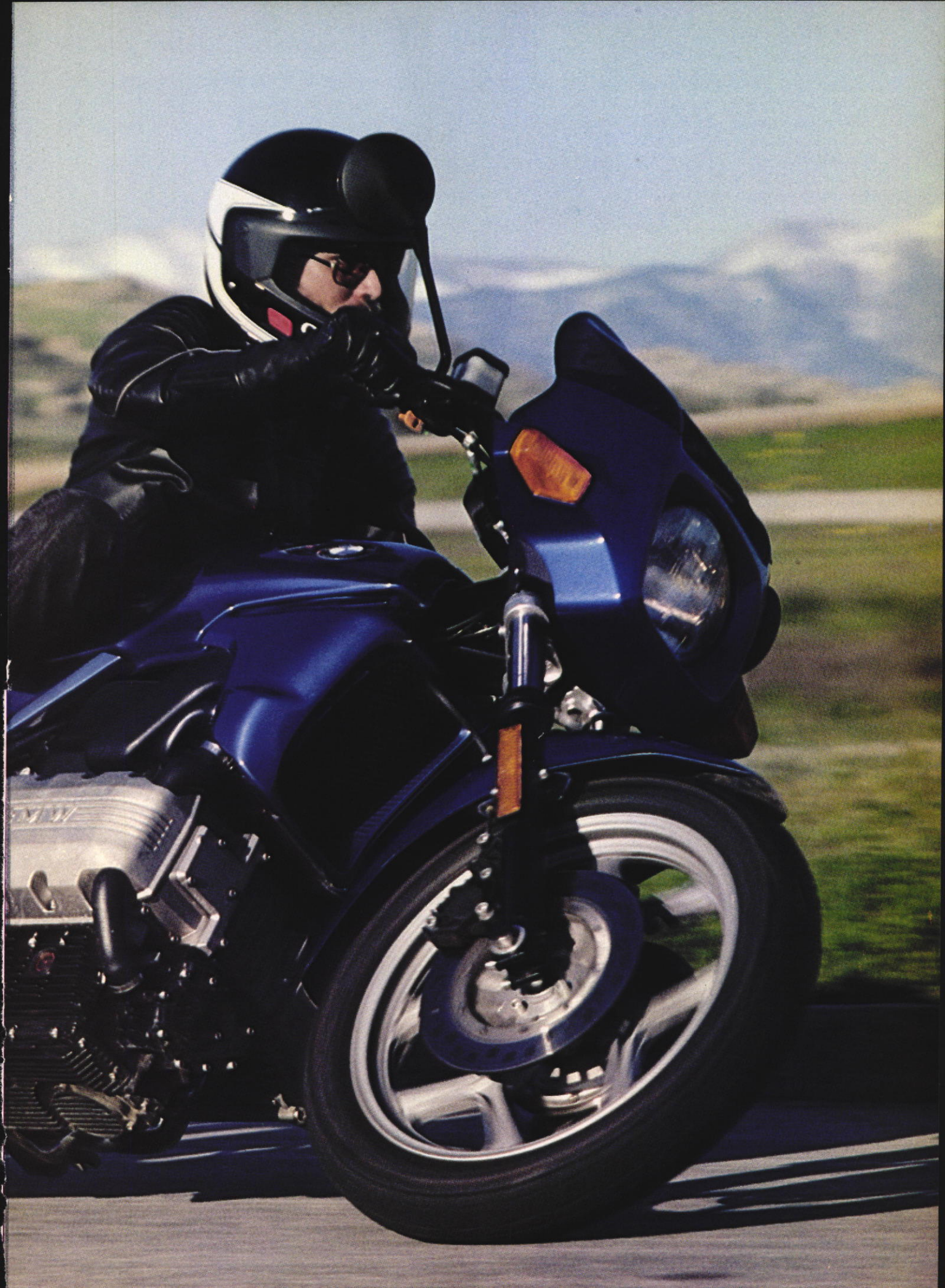
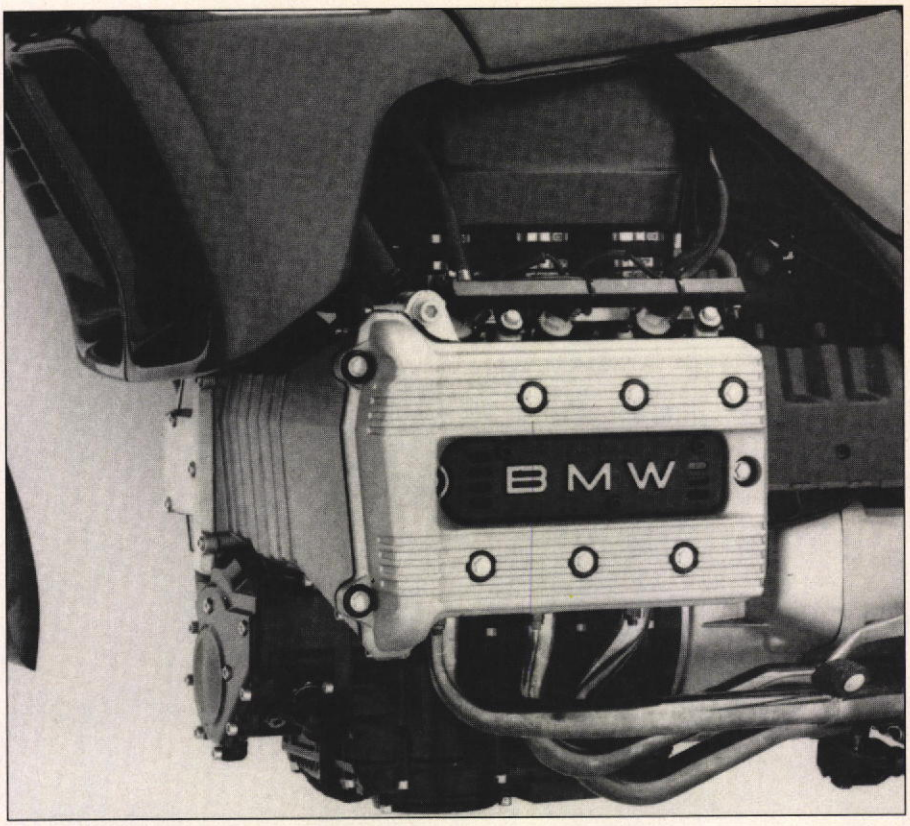


As a result of years of such inbreeding, BMW's flat-twins share not only many of the same components, but many of the same traits and characteristics, as well. So when BMW announced production of a three-quarter-liter version of the horizontal inline-four K100 introduced in 1984, few riders expected the K75 to be much more than a smaller, slower version of the liquid-cooled literbike. But to those—and many other—riders' surprise and delight, the K75C is more than just a pale imitation of the K100: It's smoother, better handling, more nimble and more comfortable than its bigger brother, and might just be the finest motorcycle to bear the blue-and-white BMW logo in the company's 63-year history.

A quick glance at the K75C doesn't do much to help explain why its personality is so different from its literbike ancestor. To all outward appearances, the K75C is just a K100 with one cylinder lopped off. Its liquid-cooled engine, like the K100's, uses a straightforward dual-overhead-cam design, with two valves per cylinder and Bosch fuel-injection. The K75C's five-speed transmission even shares ratios with the K100's gearbox. To minimize the effects of the smaller displacement, BMW engineers upped the triple's compression ratio slightly, (11:1 compared to the K100's 10.2:1), and lowered (raised numerically) its final-drive ratio, from 2.91:1 on the standard K100 to 3.20:1.

BMW engineers even considered retaining the K100's four-cylinder layout as the basis for the K75C's engine, reducing the literbike's bore and stroke to achieve the desired displacement. This would have resulted in a short-stroke, high-revving four-cylinder engine that could share many major components with the existing K100. But one of the K75C's design targets was light weight, and the projected weight saving in the four-cylinder design fell far short of the design goals. Instead, the company chose to retain the K100's original bore and stroke and simply remove one cylinder, thereby reducing displacement by 25 percent, to 740cc. The resulting three-cylinder engine is shorter than the K100's four and, according to BMW, 22 pounds lighter. And not only did BMW engineers achieve their goal of a compact powerplant for the K75C, they endowed the willing triple with a torque curve as broad and flat as Kansas, with serious power on tap above 5000 rpm.

Removing one cylinder proved a neat solution to the displacement problem, but created another one—vibration. To reduce the vibration generated by the K75C's 120-degree crankshaft, the engine's output shaft—which turns at the same speed as the crank but in the opposite direction—is equipped with a pair of counterweights. The efforts to achieve a smooth-running engine paid off handsomely: The K75C's engine is turbine-smooth throughout its entire rev range, much more so than the sometimes-buzzy K100.



© 1986 VIC HUBER

The K75's three-cylinder engine is lighter and shorter than the K100's four

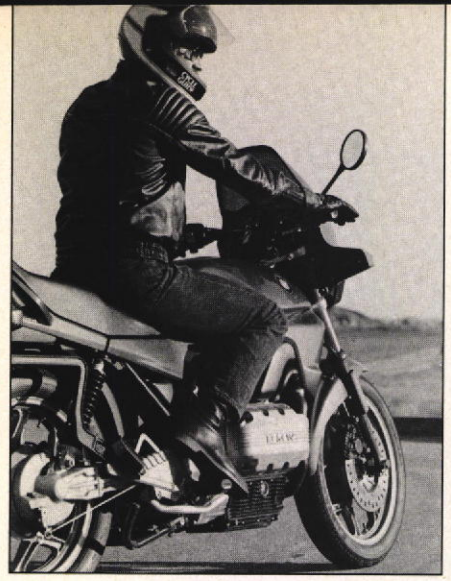
And the counterbalanced triple is smoother, too.

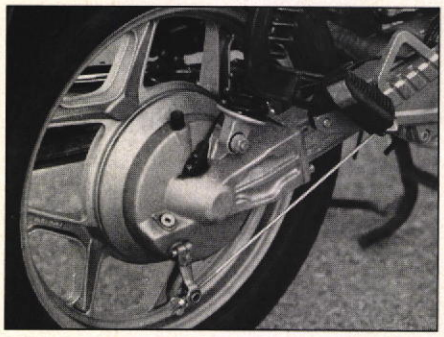
The similarity between the two K-bikes returns with their chassis and running gear. Both bikes use essentially the same frame design, with a 60.2-inch wheelbase, 27.5-degree steering head angle and 3.98-inch trail measurement. The K75C's front downtubes, however, angle back more steeply to meet the shorter engine, and the C-model uses an 18-inch rear wheel and a rear drum brake instead of the literbike's 17-inch wheel and disc.

Yet despite the two bikes' virtually identical chassis, the K75C is much more agile than the K100. Around town the cat-quick triple darts through traffic like a broken-field runner, thanks to its light steering. In fact every aspect of the K75 makes it a delight around town. The engine's right-now throttle response makes it easy to take advantage of sudden openings, and the positive gearbox is well-suited to quick shifts. The clutch has a narrow engagement range, but with its extremely light feel you soon get used to its sudden response.

On the open road, far from stop-and-go commuting, the 480-pound triple displays excellent straight-line stability on the freeway, with some susceptibility to sidewinds. When the going gets curvy it banks into corners with only a slight tug at the low, flat handlebar, requiring much less effort than the K100 despite the literbike's higher, wider handlebar. Further, once into a corner the K75C holds its line with surprising tenacity: Unlike the K100, not even sudden changes in mid-corner throttle settings will induce the triple to vary its line. The different feel of the two bikes is even more suprising given that the K75C's front fork and rear shock come straight off the K100 with only minor modifications. The rear shock spring's coils are 1mm thinner than the K100's, and BMW recommends a fork-oil level 20mm lower than on the four.

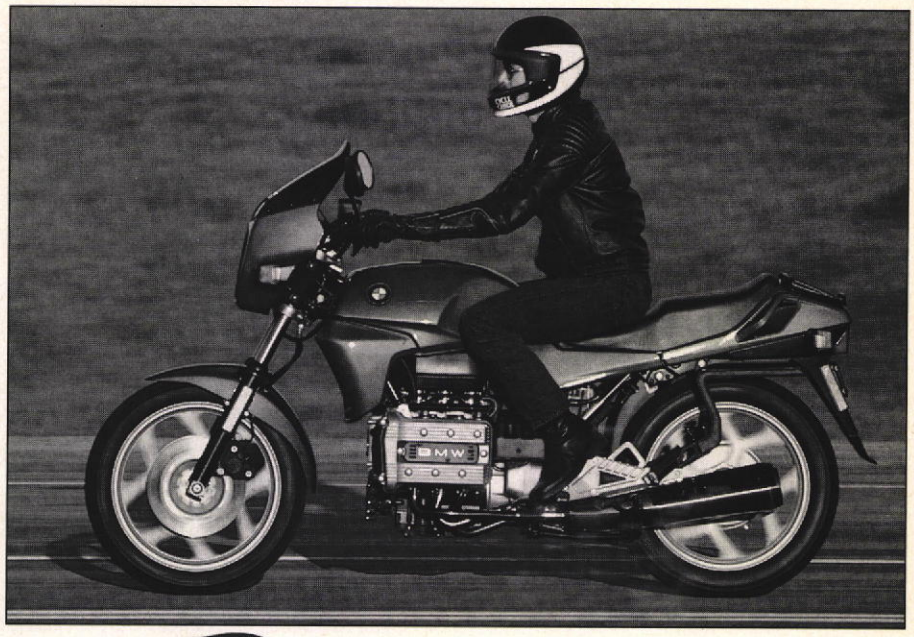
These small changes nevertheless make a big difference in the way the K75C responds to pavement irregularities compared to the K100. The fork delivers a cushy ride, and the softer rear spring makes the K75C's rear suspension more compliant by far than is the case with the K100's shock. On surface streets and Interstates alike, the K75C's suspension delivers a ride that pampers the

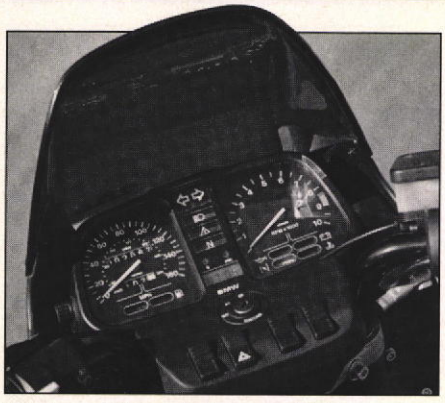




All K-bikes use unique Monolever swingarm

But drum brake is unique to the K75C.





K75C's no-frills control room and fairing

Getting the most done with the least.

rider without isolating him from the feel of the road. This exemplary ride exacts a tradeoff, though, when pavement conditions are less than ideal. The K75C's over-soft fork springs let the bike's front end dive sharply whenever the brakes are applied, and medium-sized potholes can pound the fork suddenly to its stops.

That same soft springing up front, combined with a lack of rebound damping in both the fork and rear shock, disqualifies the K75C from contention as a serious canyon carver, too: Fast sweepers induce a queasy wallow in the otherwise surefooted triple, and heavy braking instantly slams the fork to full compression. The twin 285mm discs, identical to those on the K100, do a better job of stopping the lighter triple and resist fade longer than is the case with the heavier literbike. But because the touchy Brembo binders are hard to modulate, it's hard to effect a quick, hard stop without further aggravating the fork's tendency to dive excessively.

But the secret to riding the K75C fast—and enjoying it to the fullest—lies not in knee-dragging heroics, but in a smooth, steady pace. If you're looking for flash and all-out performance, BMW candidly suggests you look elsewhere. Should you do so, though, you might miss out on one of the most versatile motorcycles BMW—or any other manufacturer—has ever built. In a market increasingly dominated by narrow-focus motorcycles, the K75C stands out as a broad-spectrum bike for people who like to *ride,* not just be seen riding. The seating position provided by the bike's flat, firm seat and low handlebar appeals to a large variety of riders, even up to six-footers, and lets you lean far enough forward to combat the wind but not enough to tire your arms and shoulders. Closed-cell foam grips cushion your hands, as well, and the small fork-mounted cockpit fairing does a good job of deflecting the brunt of the wind's force from your torso.

Along with the bike's inviting creature comforts, the K75C boasts a number of touches that prove the people who design BMWs also ride them. A flip-up seat, that long-forgotten amenity on Japanese motorcycles, conceals two storage spaces and one of the highest-quality and most complete toolkits in the business. Hoisting the K75C onto the centerstand is an easy chore thanks to a spring-loaded folding handle aft of the left sidecover. Finally, our test bike came equipped with optional detachable BMW saddlebags, which prove once again why Beemerbags are so widely copied by other manufacturers. The lockable latches always align perfectly and can be opened or closed with one finger, and with their built-in handles the bags do double duty as carry-in luggage. In addition, the interlocking seal between the halves of each bag should keep the contents dry in anything short of a typhoon. For an extra $310, these bags easily double the practicality and versatility of the K75C.

In addition to the persistence of niceties like flip-up seats and high-quality saddlebags, the K75C's overall level of performance, comfort and handling reinforces the wisdom of the BMW family tradition of gradual refinement instead of annual obsolescence. It will surely come as no surprise if the K75C continues to follow this tradition in the future. What *is* surprising—and it's a most pleasant surprise—is that in its first year of production, it's as good a motorcycle as it is. The K75C not only ranks as the best Beemer ever built, it just might be one of the best all-around motorcycles in the world. •

Nits:

- Fuel filler is too small, making it difficult to see fuel level during fill-ups.
- Steering-head-mounted fork lock is inconvenient.
- 24-hour clock is hard to decipher.
- Saddlebag locks are difficult to use.

Picks:

- Choke-on light is convenient.
- Rear wheel removal is simple.

Continued

Ride Review

• I knew I was right when Marc Cook, who normally takes to BMWs like a dog to flea dip, came back from the K75 intro raving about the bike. I'd spent nine days last fall darting through Europe on the K75C, and in the intervening months I'd begun to doubt my original bubbling appraisal of the triple. As soon as Marc started singing its praises, I knew my initial enthusiasm wasn't misplaced.

The K75C doesn't produce the kind of an adrenaline rush brought on by a *pursang* sportbike. Instead, it gives you the kind of low-key appreciation you get when you can sit at a traffic light and feel utterly smug, remembering exactly *why* you started riding motorcycles. And it's the K75's uncanny ability to reproduce that original exhilaration that puts it at the top of my Beemer list.

—Jim Miller

• When the K75 first appeared in the CYCLE GUIDE shop, there wasn't much I could see that made it significantly different from other BMWs. It was just the same conventional kind of motorcycle that reeked of its staid German manufacture. Likewise, I expected nothing outstanding in its performance.

Well, I was right—and wrong. The K75 provides all of the basics and much more. Unlike the flashy, bullet-fast sytle other bikes in the 750 class rely on, the K75 sticks to BMW's you're-here-to-ride qualities with the vengeance of Siegfried. The bike does what you want it to do when you want it, with the kind of comfort other 750's can't match. But the K75 goes a step further: It combines all that with BMW's reputation for quality workmanship and longevity.

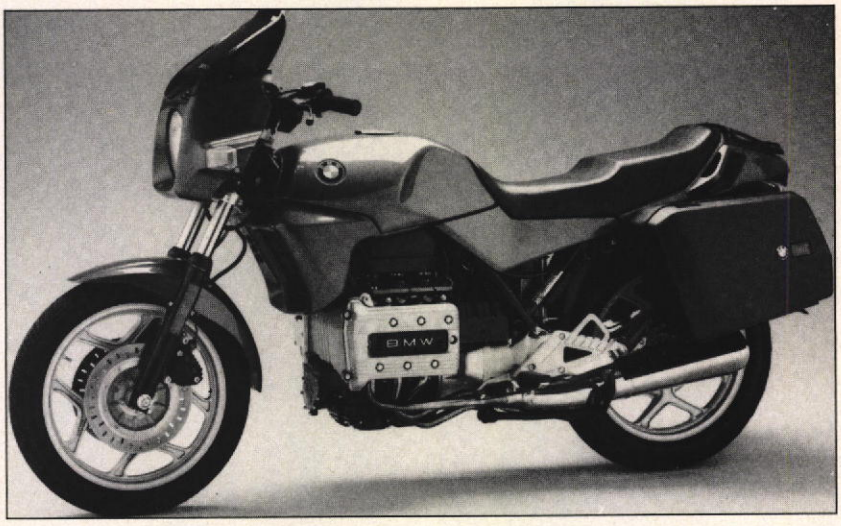
—Tim Brodd

• Okay, so maybe Miller's right: In the past, I've never been shy in displaying my dislike for BMWs. The Boxer twins seemed to me to be as strange and unfathomably quirky as a Fellini movie. And the K100, despite being a quantum leap in civility for BMW's two-wheelers, left me cold—especially those parts of me the bike's annoying vibration put to sleep.

So why did I come back from the U.S. debut of the K75 as pleased and suprised as a lottery winner? Simple. As BMW's go, the K75C is far and away the smoothest, best balanced and most pleasing example I've tried. And for the first time, BMW's philosophy of making basically broad-band bikes makes sense to me: The K75 has proven to me that this emphasis can help produce a bike genuinely good at a lot of things. And that gives me more than ample reason to rave about the K75.

—Marc Cook

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS



BMW K75C — street

IMPORTER: BMW of North America Inc., BMW Plaza, Montvale New Jersey 07645

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4850

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke horizontal longitudinal triple
Valve arrangement . . . . . .double overhead camshafts, two valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . .67.0mm x 70.0mm
Displacement 740.4cc
Compression ratio 11.0:1
Engine redline . . . . . 8500 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . .Bosch LE-Jetronic fuel-injection, three 34mm throttle bodies
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . 12-volt; 460-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 20-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . helical gears; 1.000:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . dry, single-plate
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 3.204:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	4.497	14.408	5.27
II	2.959	9.481	8.01
III	2.304	7.382	10.29
IV	1.879	6.020	12.62
V	1.666	5.338	14.23

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . BMW, 41.4mm stanchion tube diameter/6.3 in. (159mm)
Rear . . . . . single Boge, 3-position adjustable spring preload/4.6 in. (118mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . .dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 11.0-in. (280mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . single leading-shoe drum, rod-operated

TIRES

Front . . . . . 100/90-18 56H Metzeler ME33 Laser tubeless
Rear . . . . . 120/90-18 65H Metzeler Perfect ME99A tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . 480 lbs. (217.7kg)
Weight distribution . . . . 45.8% front, 54.2% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . 992 lbs. (450.0kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 481 lbs. (218.2kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 60.2 in. (1530mm)
Seat height . . . . . 32.5 in. (826mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 25.6 in. (650mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 13.2 in. (335mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.4 in. (163mm), at centerstand
Steering head angle . . . 27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 3.98 in. (101mm)
Frame . . . . . .tubular mild-steel, double downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.8 qt. (4.0/)
Fuel tank . . . . . aluminum, 5.0 gal. (18.8/), no reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, LCD gear-position indicator, LCD digital clock

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . .37 to 54 mpg (16 to 23 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . .46 mpg (20 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 185 to 270 miles (298 to 435km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph ind. . . 31 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph ind. . . 55 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 13.171 sec., 102.03 mph (164 kph)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . .121 mph (195 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . .32 ft. (9.8m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . 142 ft. (43.3m)

WARRANTY: 3 years, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: Caribic Blue

All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

Specifications refer to a California-only model.

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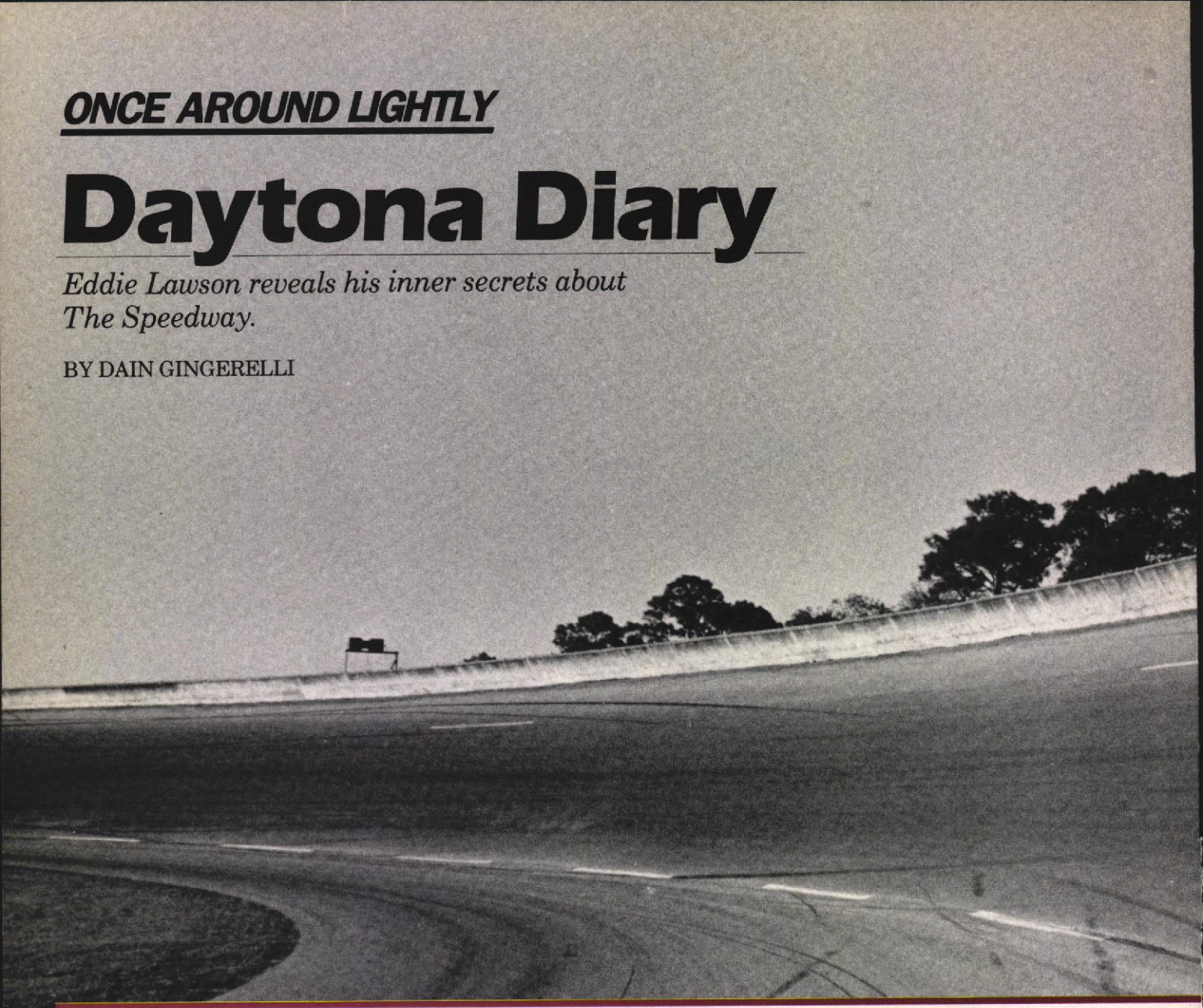
ONCE AROUND LIGHTLY

Daytona Diary

Eddie Lawson reveals his inner secrets about The Speedway.

BY DAIN GINGERELLI



Shortly after Eddie Lawson won the Daytona 200, Yamaha race director, Ken Clark, commented, "People don't realize what it takes to be World Champion until they watch somebody like Eddie." And watching Lawson ride the FZ750 Superbike underscored one reality of racing: He actually made riding a 140-horsepower Superbike look *easy*.

But lapping Daytona's 3.56-mile course in 1:56.228 seconds, as Lawson did for a new track record, is *not* easy. To drive home the point, Lawson sat down with us and explained just what it takes to lap Daytona in less than two minutes. Here's how it's done:

• Turn One: Sixth gear, downshifting to second. Top speed in sixth—168 mph; approximate speed for corner—45–55 mph.

"Going into Turn One, I'm braking at the No. 1 marker, depending on which way the wind is blowing. If there's a headwind, I'll go to the one marker; with a tailwind, to about one-point-five. I'm hard on the brakes and trying to turn in. The bike wants to turn over and tuck in, and lose the front end. With all that weight and the long wheelbase the front end is hopping off the ground, and it's a scary feeling. After I get off the brakes and the bike settles down, it unties, almost like it stretches out again, then I bend it on over. That's a pretty decent feeling when the bike is all the way over on its side; the suspension has settled, and I accelerate. But compared to a GP bike, the FZ is slow reacting. It's sideways before I know it, and it's hanging out there, and I crack the throttle while the rear tire spins. Then it goes into a little wobble through the kink, which is no problem, then I upshift. Then I run it into Turn Two."

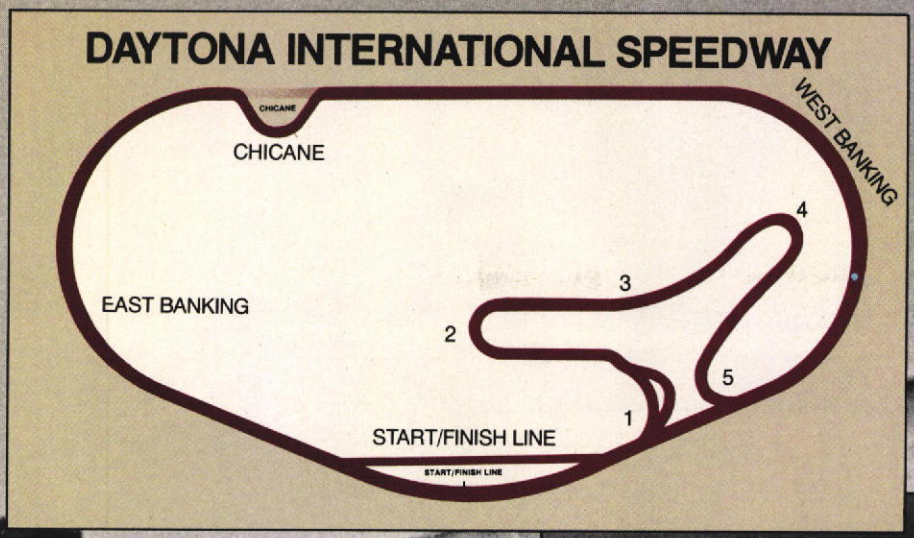
• Turn Two: Fourth gear, down to second; approximate speed in corner—50–60 mph.

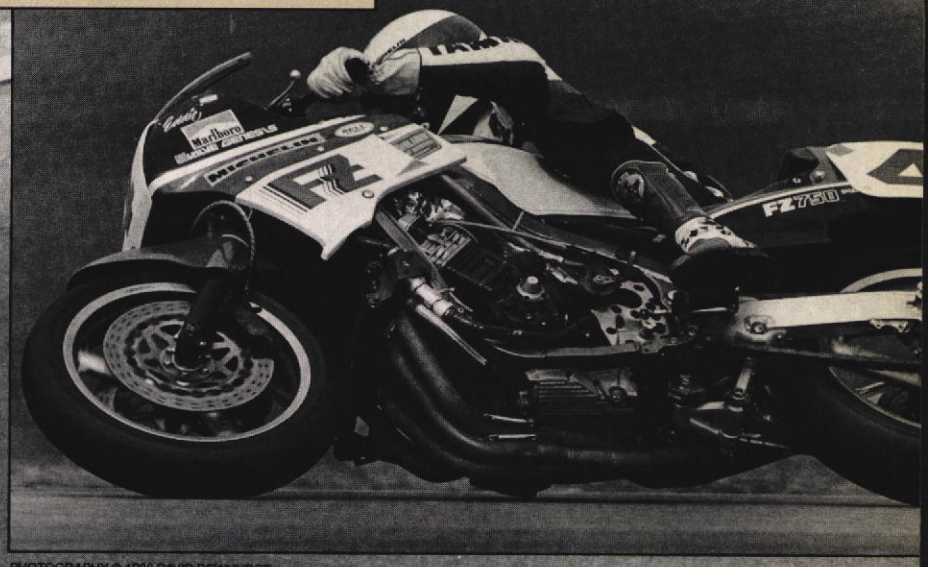
"Back down to second after hitting third, fourth gears. It's a fun corner because I slide it in, and I've got the brakes clamped on tight, letting the clutch out after banging down two gears. The thing's hopping, then I get it drifting. Once I've got the clutch out and the bike settles down, I bend it in, open the throttle before the apex, and ride it out."

• Turn Three: Fourth gear; approximate speed in corner—110 mph.

"Turn Three's a rush. I crack the throttle back. Each lap I crack it back just a little less. When the tire is new, I can go through there, not flat out, but just roll it back slightly, then back on the throttle, wide open in fourth gear. When the tire begins to go out, it's a scary corner because I get sideways. In any case I come out of there wide open, sliding."

• Turn Four: Fourth gear, down to second;





PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 DAVID DEWHURST

approximate speed in corner—45–55 mph.

"There are several different lines going into this corner. It's a decreasing radius. It goes in with quite a wide arc, then it tightens way up. A lot of guys go into Turn Four real low. You can do that keeping it tight, using a lot less racetrack, and cutting off a lot of time. Ideally, I enter Turn Four high, and high-low it, keeping my momentum up. It's better getting out of that corner fast than if I go into it fast. It seems to work; there are two ways of going in. If I want to pass, take the low line. I take the high line for a fast lap. Of course, the rear tire breaks loose there. It's always spinning pretty much through all of the infield."

• Turn Five: Third gear, down to second; approximate speed in corner—45 mph, accelerating out of corner to top speed on Banking.

"Up a gear (out of Turn Four), then back to second, hard on the brakes for the left hand Turn Five. That has a slight rise at about the apex, then it tapers back down before it goes up to the Bank. There's another slight rise before the Bank, and it tapers down again; it's hard to see. A lot of guys are hard on the throttle there, so their bikes get light, and they go sideways. I open the throttle real early, before the second rise, then crack it back slightly so the bike won't get light. I'll drift toward the wall from the momentum. I have to hold the bike down just a little bit, otherwise I'll go right to the wall. It's not so much from horsepower but the momentum. Plus the bike is long and top-heavy. From there it's grabbing a bunch of gears. A lot of guys don't use the Banking to their advantage. I stay in the top lane, then start bringing it down, letting gravity help me. I can see another 200 rpm if I do it right."

• Chicane: Sixth gear, down to second; approximate speed in Chicane—60 mph, accelerating out to top speed.

"I run down to the two-marker. Right when I'm jumping on the brakes at the two marker, I start backshifting. That corner is difficult—if I go to one-nine, or just past the two, I've gotten in hot, real hot, and I have to brake while leaning over. And I mean *really* leaning over. Like I said, the bike is wanting to tie up and do all these weird things while I'm leaned over. With my GP bike, I can lean it way over with my brakes slightly on—that's what those bikes do real well. Superbikes just don't want to lean over with the brakes on. And I'm having a difficult time with that. That's why the Chicane is so difficult for me. As soon as I'm off the brakes and ready to go right, I'm fine.

"When I make that transition, I'm on the throttle. A lot of guys let their mo-

Continued

mentum carry them through—they're practically coasting through. I'm down to second gear, and I *rev* it. This particular bike doesn't have the torque for third gear in the Chicane. In second gear, it's revving up there, and I'll see 13 grand, then I'll bang third right away. That corner is probably the most important corner for a fast time. If you don't get out of the Chicane fast, your top speed at the Start/Finish is going to be slow. I can gain three to four miles per hour by getting out of the Chicane properly."

• East Banking: Second gear, up to sixth; 168 mph.

"There's a bunch of bumps through the exit of the Chicane. The pavement transitions three or four times going up to the Banking. It's quite a lip, and it's difficult to stay on the gas there. If the tire goes off, I can't stay on the gas. I've got it wide open coming out of the Chicane, then I crack it back going up onto the Banking, or else I'll get it sideways. A lot of guys go up the Bank low, and they're going *up* the Bank. You can drop 200 rpm doing that. If you can stay—and it's difficult to do—a couple of feet to the right (at the exit), it's flatter, and it helps. Every little bit helps. The rear tire's spinning going up there a lot more than the East Banking. Once I'm up in the top lane, it stops spinning, then I kick it into sixth. I go all the way to the last Daytona sign. It's difficult to look way up the race track; I'm trying to stay on the paint (tucked low onto the gas tank) as much as possible. When I see the last Daytona sign, I can tell exactly where I'm at, and I start bringing it down to the bottom, right to the painted line. I stay tight all the way around; you're just wasting time up high there. Then back to Turn One."

"I go all the way to the last Daytona sign. It's difficult to look way up the race track; I'm trying to stay on the paint (gas tank) as much as possible."

That's what it takes to win the pole, and the race, at Daytona. To further put it into perspective, Lawson's FZ750's top speed was 168 mph on the East Bank, and he spent less than half the race, about 50 seconds a lap, on the infield's five corners. As Clark said, it takes a world champion to point out what it takes to *be* World Champion. •

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130/90H18....$51.50

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RETROSPECT:

Daytona's First Superbike Winner

No. 83 crossed Daytona's finish line before Lawson's FZ . . . about 10 years before.

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

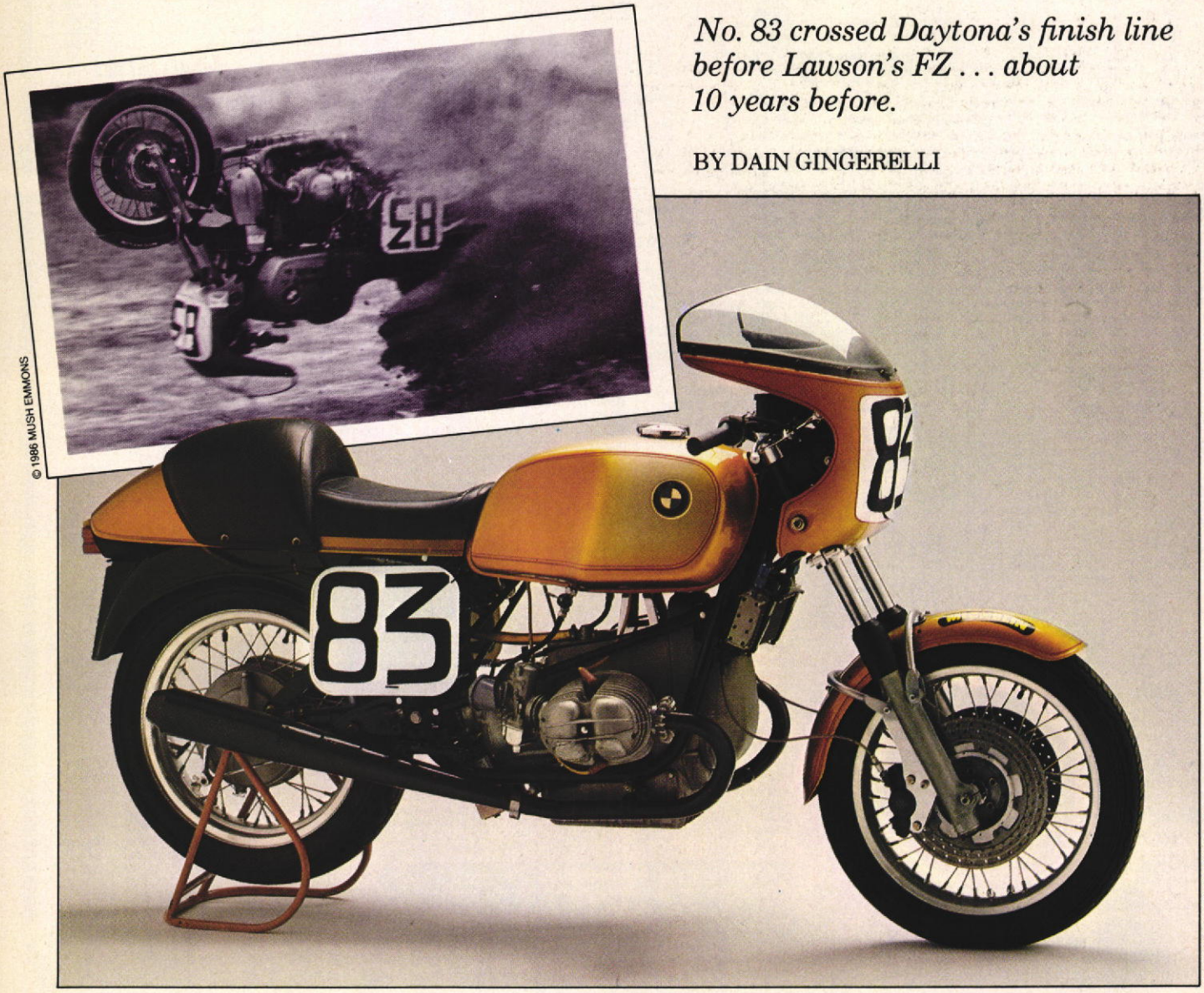
• Nobody knew what to say after the 1976 Daytona Superbike race. The checkered flag was waved, but it was uncertain who the winner was: Reggie Pridmore and Steve McLaughlin crossed the finish line with their BMWs practically fused at the cylinder heads, making it impossible to call out the winner.

On the 10-year anniversary of that 50-mile race—and Superbike racing's debut—McLaughlin recalls of that Daytona finish, "I knew in my heart that I won." Even so, the AMA officials initially gave the nod, and the trophy, to Pridmore in victory circle. Later, a series of photos altered the decision, and McLaughlin was credited with winning the AMA's first *official* Superbike race; prior to 1976, the class was called Super Production, and the 1975 Daytona race winner was Dave Aldana on a Kawasaki.

But history was made in March 1976 if for no other reason than the Butler & Smith-sponsored (distributors for BMW motorcycles at the time) racebikes that McLaughlin and teammates Pridmore and Gary Fisher rode forever changed the course of the class. That's because the bikes' builder and race team manager, Udo Gietl, had stretched his imagination, and the rules, to concoct three of the most radical bikes ever to roll onto a Superbike grid.

"There was a loophole that said you could modify the swingarm and relocate the rear suspension," Gietl said of his '76 team bikes. "I tested the rules when I built the monoshock rear suspension."

In short, Gietl, with the help of right-hand man Todd Schuster, modified the rear portion of the R90S's frame, reworked the swingarm, then tied the new assembly to the frame using a single Koni shock absorber pirated from a Formula 1 racecar. The semi-horizontal shock bolted to the frame backbone, just above the engine, much like Yamaha's monoshock intro-



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duced on the TZ250 and 750 about the same time. "Actually," says Gietl, who now heads American Honda's roadrace effort, "I had my monoshock system first. I used it on one of our bikes in '73."

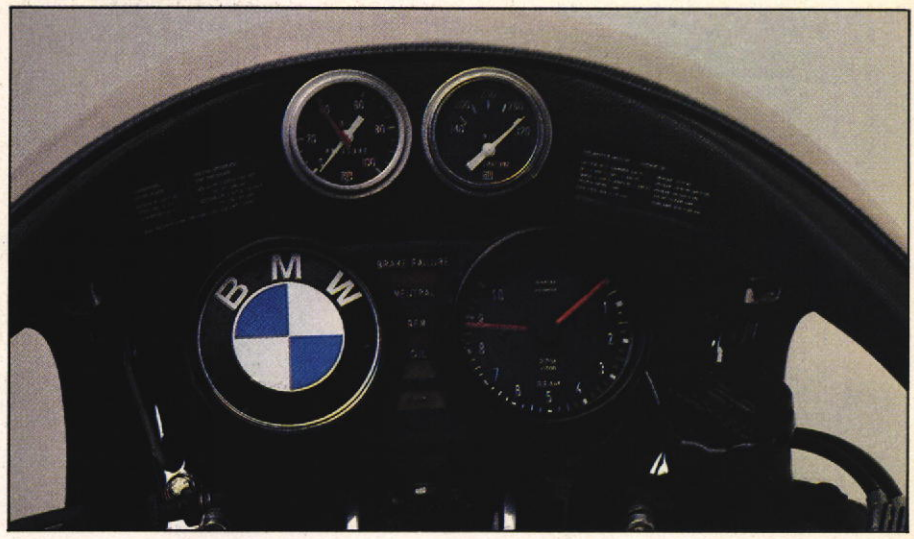
Naturally, the three BMWs caused quite a controversy in the Daytona pits. But Gietl's rules-stretching monoshock suspension was just the tip of the iceberg, and like most other front-line Superbikes at that time, the B&S bikes were loaded with rules-challenging alterations. Looking back at Superbike racing's early years, Gietl notes, "To get that horsepower, you had to do *something*."

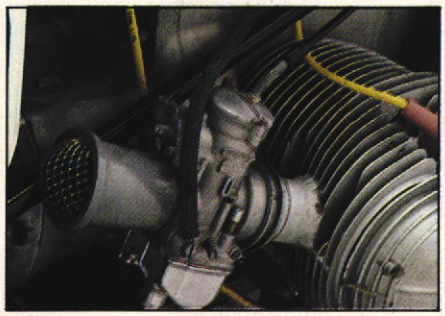
And it was the horsepower of those early-day Beemers that really set them apart from the competition. Gietl said the 1020cc opposed twins were producing as much as 105 horsepower in their prime. Getting that horsepower was the interesting part.

The team bikes were conceived in 1975, when Gietl spent most of the year burrowed in the B&S race shop dyno-testing engines. And with the magical genius of Ken Augustine to flow the heads and make the engines breathe, Gietl built a trio of Superbikes that dominated the class in 1976. The immediate payoff was a hammerlock on Daytona's 31-degree banking, as Fisher, McLaughlin and Pridmore swapped the lead until Fisher's bike shouted uncle, opening the door for the famous photo finish.

But even discounting the importance of their originial win, or the McLaughlin/Pridmore sprint to the tape, the B&S bikes are legends due to their mechanical beauty alone. Beneath the hand-massaged (by Schuster) 38mm Dell'Orto carburetors, there was some real hot-rodding poetry in Gietl's engines. For instance, to shorten the protruding cylinders—"for cornering clearance," Gietl pointed out—the cylinder barrels were shaved and short titanium connecting rods were used. Also, the valve covers were beveled, and steel plates welded onto them: According to Gietl, touching a smooth, flat surface to the pavement while cornering was less dangerous than touching down a sharp, jagged one.

The remainder of the BMW's muscle-power reads like a hot-rod parts catalog. The list includes an all-metal dry clutch that Gietl fabricated; stainless steel valves lifted from a Chrysler hemi-head engine; Sig Erson camshaft; and titanium pushrods. The crankshaft was stock, "but with English bearings," Gietl points out. A set of Venolia forged pistons were inserted into the 96mm-bore cylinders (stock was 90mm) and to assure longevity at high rpm ("They revved from 9000 to 9200 with reasonable safety"), Kurt Liebmann's machine shop crafted wrist pins using K11 heat-treated steel. Underscoring further the hot-rod spirit that lived inside the engine, there were three different brands of piston rings; the top L-section ring was crafted especially for the Venolia pistons, while the middle ring was from a Chevy, and the oil-control ring was made by the Perfect Circle piston-ring company.





Dell'Orto carbs were stock R90S items

Gietl made sure there were few others.

Perhaps Gietl's real pride and joy about his Superbike engines, though, were the valve lifters. They were imported from Germany, and Gietl says of them, "They were made from a *very* thin steel shell that was welded close under vacuum. Those things were beautiful. I still have some of them as souvenirs."

Since the rules allowed stock mufflers only, all that mechanical wizardy would have exited slowly in a wisp of smoke out the exhaust pipes had it not been for additional hot rodding by Gietl and the guys. As he explains today, the mufflers were cut down each side to expose the baffling. The mufflers were gutted, and a reverse-cone megaphone—developed by Axtel for Harley XR750s—replaced the BMW's stock baffling. The pipe was welded back together, then rechromed. In Gietl's words, "They looked stock." Like he said, they had to do something to get all that horsepower.

There were other *little* things done to the B&S bikes that separated them from the rest of the pack, too. A close ratio gearbox, using BMW factory third, fourth and fifth gears with specially made first and second cogs by Augustine replaced the stock cluster, and the fork was reinforced with a brace. Also, factory-cast magnesium pieces (excluding the engine case—that was illegal) reduced weight. In fact, even equipped with the WM6 and WM4 wire rim wheels, Ol' No. 83 weighed about 370 pounds at Daytona.

McLaughlin ultimately launched No. 83 into the Laguna Seca sky that year, rearranging some of its bodywork in the process. When the team was disbanded at the end of the season, Johnny's of Bakersfield (California) bought the McLaughlin bike and commissioned it back into Superbike service. The new owner put it into victory circle one more time, when Ron Pierce rode it to win the 1977 Loudon Superbike race. In due time, No. 83 was retired, and finally purchased from Johnny's by Bruce Armstrong, Cagiva's Dealer Development manager, who is reponsible for its current restoration.

Indeed, Armstrong is a worthy owner/restorer of this Superbike legend. He maintains the bike in running condition, and manages to bounce its throaty exhaust notes off canyon walls in Southern California every now and then. He justifies this behavior, though, by saying, "I have left upper-level handling and rpm ranges unexplored." Armstrong knows that the beauty of No. 83 is in the bike, not its performance. "I've turned it into a flower pot," he says, "with no regrets whatsoever." None from here, either. •

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RIDING IMPRESSION:

Triumph X75 Hurricane

The winds of change.

BY JERRY SMITH

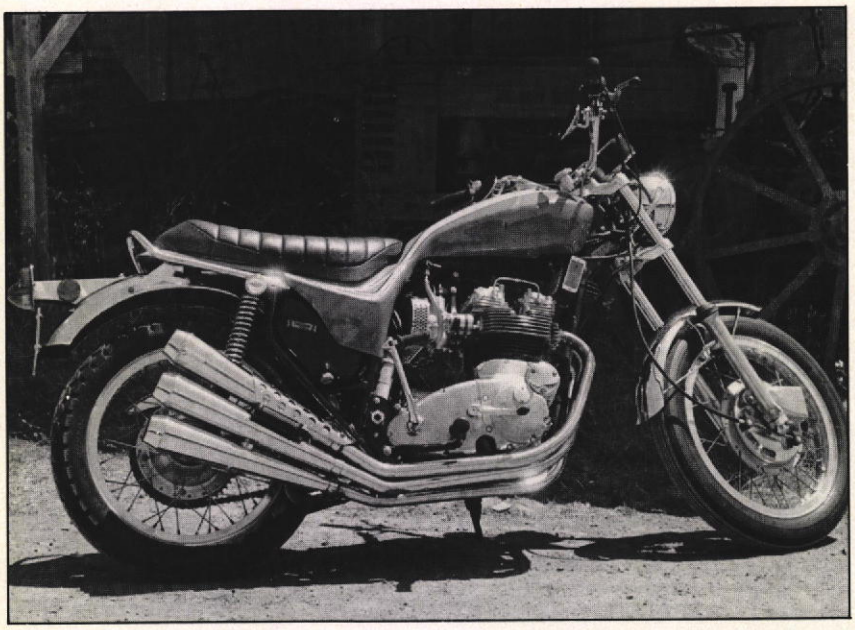
Cruisers are such an integral part of today's two-wheel scene that it's hard to imagine a time when every major manufacturer didn't have at least one boulevard bike in its lineup. Still, every trend, including the cruiserbike phenomenon, has a beginning, and despite the number of Magnas, Viragos, Vulcans and Intruders on the road, don't look for the origins of the cruiserbike in Japan—or Milwaukee, for that matter. Instead, start in Nutley, New Jersey, and look first at the Triumph X75 Hurricane, a bike whose lean styling, throaty exhaust note and stable handling are still sought after by cruiser riders today.

In 1967, though, two years before the birth of the Hurri-

PHOTOGRAPHY/© 1986 JERRY SMITH

Continued

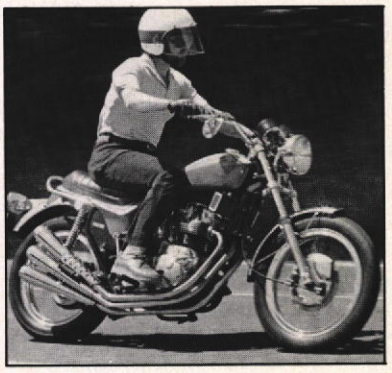
The Hurricane is a trendsetter, the custom era's firstborn.

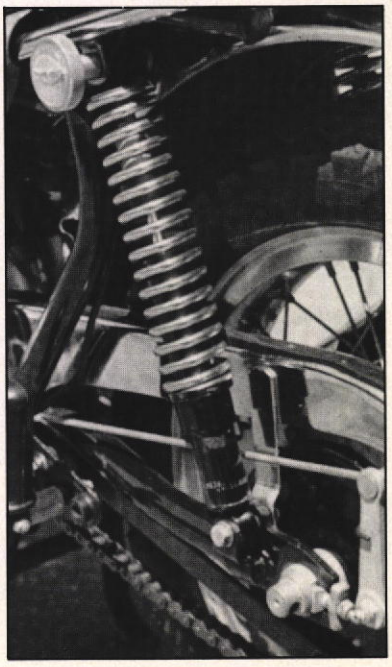


cane, if you wanted a cruiser-styled bike you had to build one yourself. Don Brown, who was then vice president and director of BSA Inc., had seen enough of these homegrown customs from his office window in Nutley to convince him it was the right time for a major manufacturer to capitalize on the growing trend.

Brown even had a particular bike in mind for his experiment. He knew BSA's soon-to-be-released 750cc Rocket Three had plenty of speed, but he thought the homely triple would be handicapped by its British styling, especially against the the new 750cc four-cylinder bike Honda was rumored to have waiting in the wings. So he suggested to his superiors at BSA that they restyle the Rocket to appeal more to American tastes.

The hidebound BSA brass would have no part of it, though, nor of "vaguely chopperesque" motorcycles, as they termed them, "designed for sidewalk cruising." Still, Brown was certain his hunch was right, and that the time was right to build a motorcycle with a uniquely American look. So he and a few sympathetic friends inside BSA began to look for someone to restyle the Rocket in secret. Soon Brown learned of a man named Craig Vetter, a talented stylist and fabricator, and flew him to Nutley to discuss the project. At the close of the meeting, Brown gave Vetter the keys to a new Rocket Three, and Vetter rode it home to Rantoul, Illinois, to begin work.





Vetter stripped the Rocket of its lumpy bodywork and began to make sketches. He and Brown were in constant communication during the project, trading ideas and making suggestions, until the prototype bike was completed in late 1969. On Halloween of that year it was presented to astonished BSA executives. They greeted the stunning motorcycle with such enthusiasm that within hours it was crated for shipment to England.

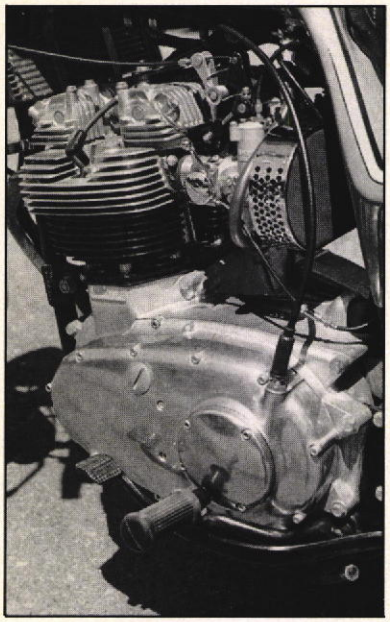
While the Hurricane prototype was being readied for production, however, financially troubled BSA closed its doors, and the X75 made its debut in 1972 as a Triumph. But soon that company was on shaky ground, too. Triumph couldn't afford to take chances, and since the Hurricane was a gamble—and a fairly expensive one at that—it was dropped from the company's lineup after just one year of production.

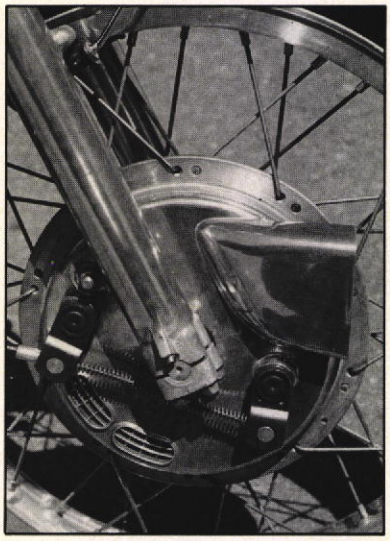
Even though only 1200 Hurricanes were built, their impact on the motorcycle industry was far-reaching, and the influence of its styling spread beyond the shores of America to Japan. The British might not have seen the Hurricane's potential, but the Japanese did. In 1975 Kawasaki introduced its first "factory custom," the KZ900LTD, and from that point on the cruiser era was off and running. The cruiser market is now firmly in Japanese hands, and the efforts of two men to transform a dowdy-looking bike into a dazzling boulevardier serve only as an interesting footnote to the story of the British motorcycle industry.

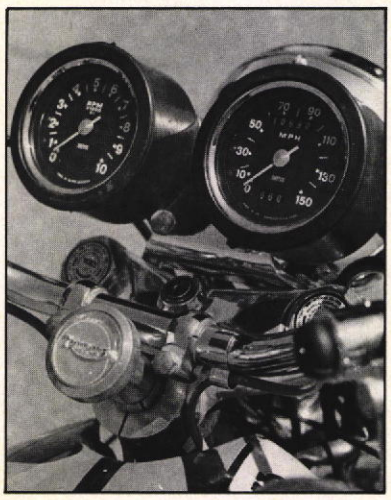
Even 15 years later, though, the Hurricane is a striking motorcycle. Many still survive, some to be ridden and others simply to be admired. And although a hundred permutations of its silhouette have gone from the drawing board to the showroom floor since the Hurricane's demise, the original still looks as fresh as today's headlines.

A ride on a Hurricane might almost convince you it's a more current model than its Triumph logo suggests. The engine starts with no more than one or two kicks, and the trio of Amal carburetors, contrary to popular legend, meters fuel consistently throughout the rev range. The three-cylinder overhead valve powerplant is smooth, fairly quiet and respectably fast. There's wall-to-wall torque on tap in the basement of its

But being ahead of the times is just as bad as being behind.







powerband, and engine vibration is no more severe than modern Japanese vee-twin cruisers. And the Triumph's diaphragm clutch is markedly superior to those in some cruisers of today.

It's not just the Hurricane's engine that would feel right at home in a modern cruiser: The bike's seating position, though not as severe as some of today's cruisers, still has a familiar feel. The Hurricane's seat is low and narrow, and the shift pedal, placed high and toward the front of the right-side engine case, dictates a forward placement for the footpegs. One major departure from modern cruiser ergonomics is the Hurricane's wide, flat handlebar, which looks like it would be more appropriate to a dirttracker than a boulevard bike.

Stock Triumph and BSA triples are known for rock-steady handling. The Hurricane's long front fork undermines this trait somewhat, enough to discourage backroad heroics but not enough to disqualify it from the occasional brisk dash through the twisties. The fork is actually longer than either Brown or Vetter intended originally, but it turned out to be one of the most distinctive features of the Hurricane when it was introduced.

Less distinctive are the Hurricane's standard issue drum brakes. Even though front disc brakes were being fitted to other British bikes when the Hurricane was built, it was felt the drum brake had a more traditional appearance. Riders accustomed to the suspension compliance of modern cruisers will be disappointed in the Hurricane's suspension, however. Although fairly typical of the times, the fork and shocks are oversprung and underdamped by today's standards.

By any standards, though, the Hurricane is a trendsetter, often imitated but seldom improved upon. Modern technology has eclipsed its performance but its styling, the product of a collaboration between two farsighted motorcycle enthusiasts, remains timeless. As a bittersweet footnote to the demise of the British motorcycle industry, it's tempting to speculate what might have happened had Triumph ushered in the cruiserbike boom instead of the Japanese. Had that been the case, it's possible cruisers would still have the distinctively American styling pioneered by the X75 Hurricane—but with a noticeable British accent. •

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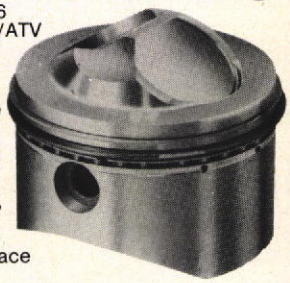

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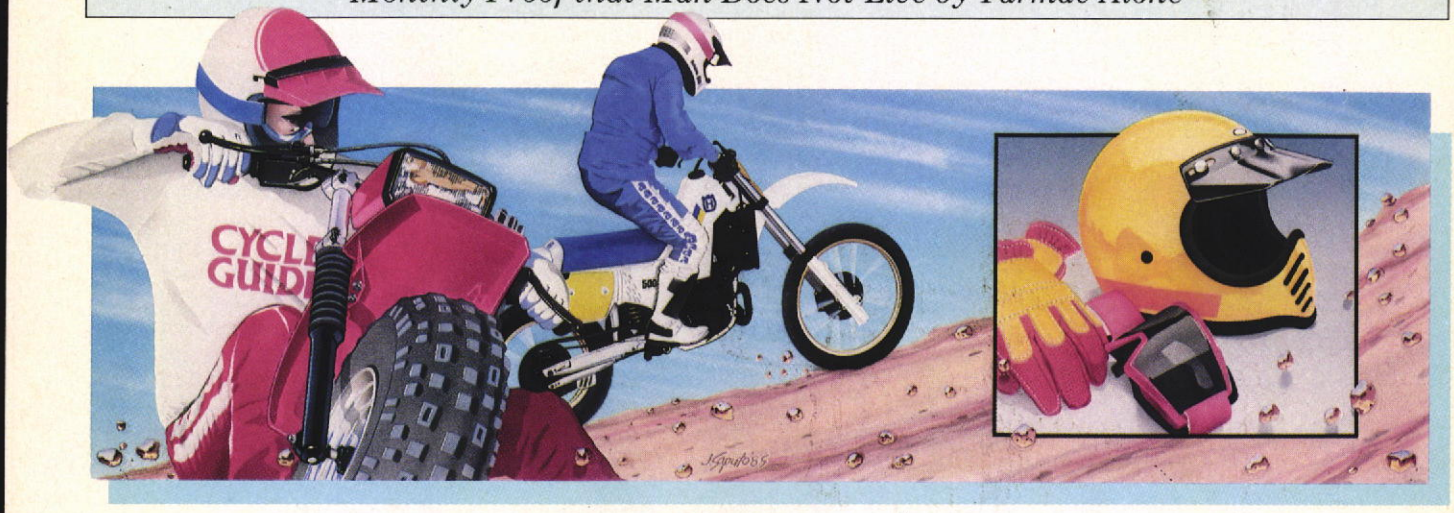

Johnson & Johnson

• Two words best describe the annual motocross racing during Florida's Cycle Week last March: Johnson and Johnson. It was Rick Johnson, MX racing's most recent hot-shoe and good-guy, who led the charge at the outdoor opener in Gainesville, then went to Daytona the following week for his fourth Supercross win of the year.

You might say Johnson has two factors going for his winning this season. First, there's the matter of regaining the 250 National Championship. And as a further aid, Johnson figures he has the best mechanic on the circuit, Brian Lunniss.

RJ learned a tough lesson last year when he failed in defending his 250 National title. True, he could still win races, but the spark that ignites champions was missing. After thrashing the competition at Gainesville, he said of his performance last year, "I never knew what it was like to lose something until I lost the No. 1 Plate to (Jeff) Ward." The Champion in Johnson was rising again.

As if RJ needed more motivation, he credits Lunniss with a portion of his success this year, too. Besides boasting that Lunniss is the best wrench in the series, Johnson says his right-hand man is a motivator and tough trainer. "Brian makes me practice," RJ said, "until *he* gets tired." Judging by the duo's win ratio thus far, Lunniss must never rest. And never resting or giving up can mean the difference between being a winner and a champion in motocross racing. *—Dain Gingerelli*

Dumb Question Award

• During the Gainesville victory ceremonies, announcer Larry Maiers asked the crowd if anybody had a question to ask race winner, Rick Johnson. Finally, one person piped up and asked RJ why he beat Jeff Ward. Johnson answered straight-faced, "Because he was slower than I was." *—Dain Gingerelli*

Continued

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PROUCT EVALUATION:

Hallman Racing Bunsavers II

Dirt bike underware.

• A long day riding on your favorite track or trail can be great fun. This good time can turn into misery if your riding pants begin to rub you the wrong way. But anyone who's ever come back from a day in the saddle feeling like an infant with diaper rash can appreciate Hallman Racing's latest addition to the off-road wardrobe: Bunsavers II riding shorts.

Bunsavers resemble bicycling shorts, and are designed to help eliminate chafing and discomfort often caused by motocross riding pants. The Hallman shorts are constructed from stretchable Lycra, like cycling shorts, with moisture-absorbing polypropylene padding in the crotch. Continuing the pedal-power theme, the Bunsavers have a tall waistline and the legs extend to midthigh.

This construction combines to create some of the most comfortable shorts you'll ever want to caress your cheeks. In fact, slipping into the Bunsavers is just short of a sensual experience. The silky material hugs you tightly, yet stretches easily to allow full body movement. What's more, they fit comfortably under motocross riding pants and don't interfere with the pants' protective padding. And once you take the Bunsavers out onto the track, you'll be hooked: The shorts completely eliminate chafing in the areas they cover, without making you feel like you're wearing a girdle. In addition, the crotch padding helps make hard saddles a bit more accommodating.

Overall, Bunsavers do exactly what they were designed to do. They're also ideal for wearing to the track under your street clothes, because they allow you to change into and out of your riding gear in the pits without mooning everyone. In fact, the only problem we had with Hallmans was a bunching up of the lower portion of the leg material, and this was only noticeable while standing around or driving. But that's a minor complaint, especially considering that the Bunsavers can take the sting out of a long day of jumps and whoops—and that's what counts in the end. *—Bill Wolf*

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TRACK TEST:

KTM 500MX

A serious contender steps into the ring.

BY DAVID DEWHURST

• Knob-shredding horsepower can make most Open-class motocrossers about as much fun to ride as going fifteen rounds with the heavyweight champ: Despite the promise of all those horses, the actual experience is all too often painful, and you feel great when the whole blurry experience is over. But KTM's latest 500 in some ways isn't quite so brutal. In fact, the racetrack experience can be quite pleasant with the 500MX, and you won't always want it to stop.

What sets the 500MX apart from some muscle-bound heavyweights is a powerband that won't hit you while your guard is down. Instead, the KTM keeps you dancing with a seemingly bottomless barrel of torque that makes fast lap times possible even if you miss shifts or botch a few lines. The KTM can't perform miracles, but it does have an uncanny way of averting man-made disasters.

This magical power comes from an over-square liquid-cooled motor that helps redefine the word "torque." Alongside the KTM, Honda's XR600 seems almost cammy, and a CR500 feels like a high-strung middleweight fighter. KTM has created this very usable powerband with nothing more sophisticated than a Stone Age-simple Bing carb, a reed valve and conventional porting. The Bing even has an Amal-like 'tickler' button instead of the usual cold-start circuit found on Japanese carbs. Yet for all its rudimentary features, the KTM motor starts, hot or cold, with the consistency of an quartz watch. One healthy kick of the lefthand starter is all it takes almost every time. That's something the high-strung Japanese Open-classers can't always match.

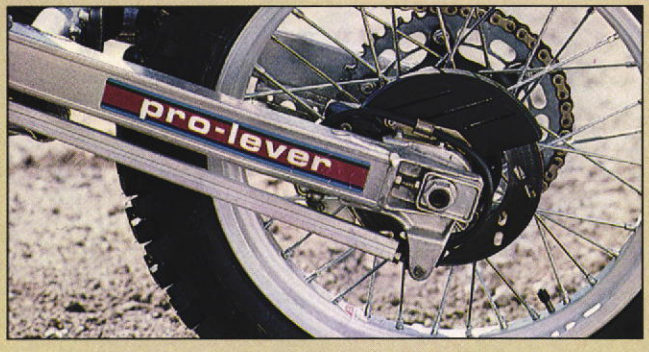
The competition also has a hard time matching the KTM's off-idle punch. Yank open the Bing's mouth and the 500MX responds instantly with a controllable lunge—no matter how slow the motor is turning. In fact, the best laps result from short-shifting and lugging the motor in turns. That way the KTM lunges forward without the expected uncontrollable wheelspin and opposite-lock wheelies. All the same, however, you pay for this easy-to-use response on long straights, where the KTM eventually runs out of breath. It will keep revving, but compared to its Japanese competition, the KTM isn't a top-end screamer.

But few riders can extract every last erg from a screaming Open-classer, and the KTM's real advantage comes from getting its power to the ground and punching itself out of a turn quickly. That's where the KTM

Continued

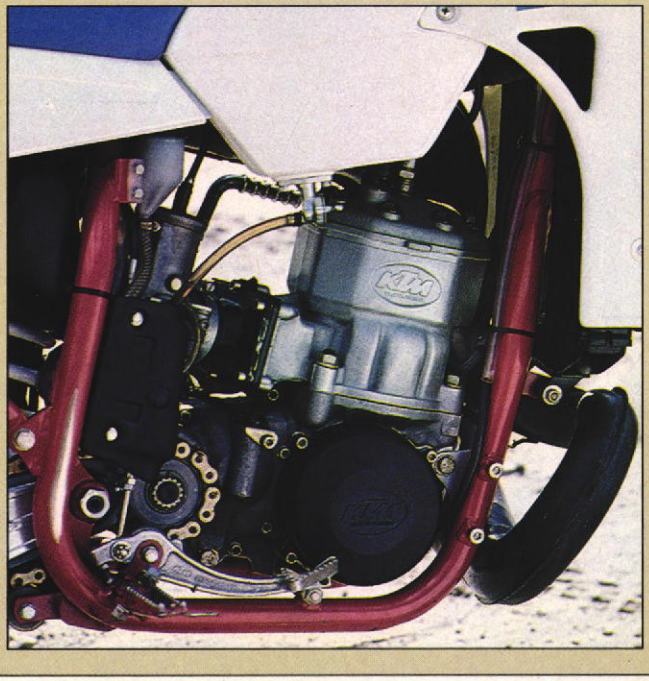
has a double advantage, because in addition to its slingshot acceleration, this single-shock racer turns with laser-sharp precision. Even with its stock hard-compound Metzelers, the 500MX can snap inside many 250s on the smooth turns of a rock-hard track. It doesn't show the same affinity for berms, however, unless you attack them with the unbridled aggression of a streetwise heavyweight.

The KTM's aggressive nature also is revealed over bumps and holes. Little stuff gets gobbled up by the silky-smooth action of the first few inches of suspension travel, but larger bumps won't go unnoticed. The upside-down White Power fork has a plush initial feel, but its response is spoiled by excessive compression damping. And eliminating the harshness at the front is complicated by the fork's lack of external adjustments. As



with most rear shocks—and Honda's new cartridge fork—the White Power unit controls damping fluid via a series of stacked washers, which can be altered to adjust damping. The addition of an external compression-damping adjuster—or any external adjustment at all—might have helped in dialing in the fork, but it probably would not have had sufficient range to cure the problem completely.

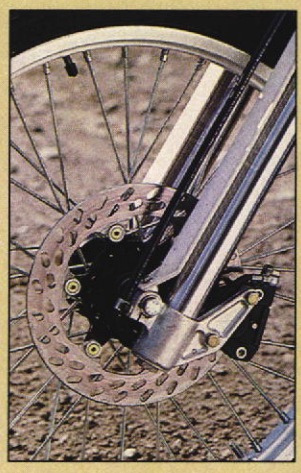
While the single White Power shock does have external adjustments for both compression and rebound damping, neither adjuster can be set to a level soft enough for average riders. KTM knows about the problem—this year's new rear linkage and shorter shock is a partial cure for this stiffness, as well as a fix for last year's shock-shaft breakage. But the mechanical changes are not



KTM 500MX

Importer: KTM America Inc.,
315 W. Bradley Ave.,
El Cajon, California 92020

Category	Motocross
Suggested retail price	$3189
Engine type	liquid-cooled two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one reed-valve controlled intake, four main transfers, three booster transfers, one exhaust
Bore and stroke	89.0mm x 78.0mm
Displacement	485.2cc
Compression ratio (uncorrected)	16.8:1
Carburetion	one 38mm Bing slide/needle
Gearbox	5-speed
Front suspension/wheel travel	White Power, /10.9 in. (277mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	White Power, 8-position adjustable compression damping, 11-position adjustable rebound damping, 17mm spring preload range/10.8 in. (275mm)
Weight	227 lbs. (103.0kg)
Wheelbase	57.5 to 58.7 in. (1460 to 1490mm)
Seat height	37.8 in. (960mm)
Steering head angle	28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	N/A
Fuel tank	plastic, 2.7 gal. (10.3/)
Warranty	30 days
Available color	white only



enough for the average guy who will buy the KTM. Pros like 250 World Champion Heinz Kinigadn and Danny Chandler, who helped develop the bike, think the damping's just fine, but while both ends are well balanced, they are both overdamped for regular riders.

Despite this pro-level compression damping, the 500MX still does a good job of tracking straight and true over everything from motocross jumps to desert whoops. And, not suprisingly, the harder it's pushed, the better the KTM feels. Pushed to the limit the 500MX provides a level of high-speed confidence not always found in the heavyweight competition. But the second you back off, the stiff damping will pound you like a well-worn speed bag, reminding you that all isn't perfect.

Adding to this tiring jostling are average grips, rigidly mounted bars and a moderate level of vibration that can make hands feel tired before the rest of your body's warmed up. Further, the Bing's heavy return spring and a less-than-silky Magura twistgrip combine to help develop muscles rather than help win races. While those are all simple, inexpensive fixes that can be made at home, they should have been made at the factory in Austria.

You'll also have to spend some time fixing the trick-looking Brembo rear disc brake, which does more for cosmetics than stopping power. The pads and ventilated rotor are poorly matched, overheating rapidly and wearing out faster than a set of tank decals. KTM is aware of the problem and notes that solid discs and new pads and caliper pistons will be sent to '86 500MX owners. That promises to bring the rear brake's performance up to the level of the Brembo front disc, which is light and positive and feels as good as most Japanese discs.

The KTM also has a few other features not often found on European bikes. For example, clutch pull is as light as most 250s. KTM has also abandoned its age-old tradition of using a blunt razor blade as a seat. The new-style saddle isn't exactly soft, but it's a lot closer to the comfortable Japanese norm. The rest of the 500MX also displays an obvious attention to smaller detail that has traditionally separated Europe from Japan. Those changes, plus the most forgiving motor in the Open class, make the KTM a serious contender in the heavyweight class. And with less compression damping and an improved rear brake, KTM could really be a knockout. ●

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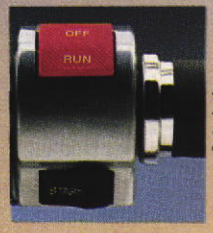

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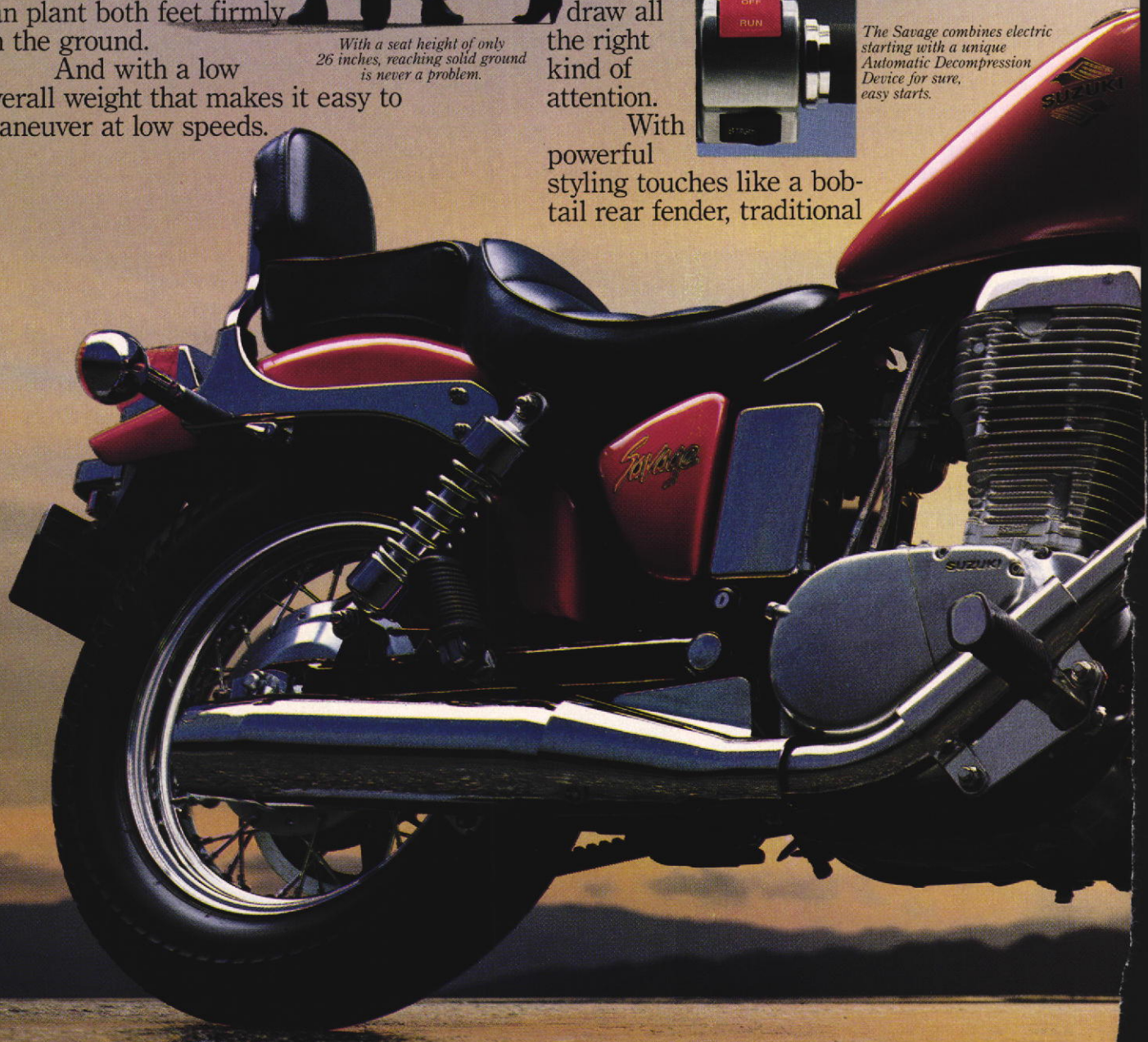

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Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

Daytona 200

Eddie Lawson was the fastest, the longest.

• "The Daytona 200," defending AMA Superbike Champion Freddie Merkel said after finishing third in this year's race, "is a battle to see who can go the longest the fastest ... or the fastest the longest." And that's exactly how Eddie Lawson tackled this year's race; after winning the pole position in record time (1:56.228), he walked away with his 50-mile qualifying heat on Friday and led all but three of the 57 laps in the 200-miler on Sunday. To say that Lawson and his factory Yamaha FZ750 ruled the Daytona banking this year is putting it mildly.

Lawson showed up for Cycle Week looking trim and fit. Losing the world title to Freddie Spencer last year took its toll on Lawson, and since last autumn, he has focused his energies on one thing—winning back the 500cc World Championship. His global quest actually began last October at Carlsbad, California, where he won the ABC television Superbikers event. After a winter of hard training, he showed up at Daytona for his first 1986 showdown with Spencer. Lawson was ready, and he stalked the pits like a caged cat at feeding time.

But the raw meat, a.k.a. Freddie Spencer, never came Lawson's way. Early-week rumors of Spencer bypassing this year's 200 became reality on Wednesday, when Honda team manager, Udo Gietl, announced that Spencer would not attempt to win an

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Continued

unprecedented fifth consecutive Daytona Superbike race. The reason, according to Honda's official release, for Spencer's DNS (Did Not Show): "Illness." Although there was no confirmation, pit rumors ranged from contractual disputes with American Honda (Spencer's contract is with Honda Racing Corp. in Japan, not with American Honda) to a sinus problem, leading a member from another team to suggest that Spencer was having "*signing* problems."

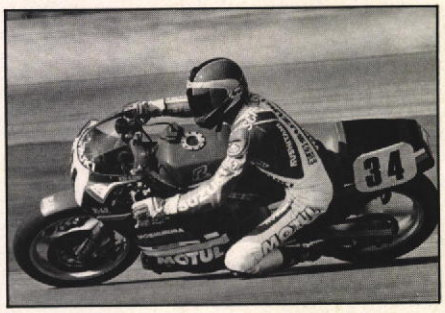
Spencer's problems didn't distract Lawson, however, and he focused his attention on winning the race for Yamaha. Indeed, Yamaha was serious about winning back the Daytona 200 which, until last year, had carried the tuning fork seal of approval since 1972. In addition to Lawson, there was Team Yamaha rider Jim Filice, and Mike Baldwin, who, like Lawson, was on loan from one of the Yamaha works GP teams. And, just to make certain that the FZ750's suspension was dialed-in correctly, Kel Carruthers served as Lawson's official pit valet, of sorts. Carruthers work didn't go unnoticed, either, as evidenced by Lawson's infield advantage. Honda's race director, Gary Mathers, commented on Saturday, "We have about two miles per hour on Lawson, but he makes up for it on the infield."

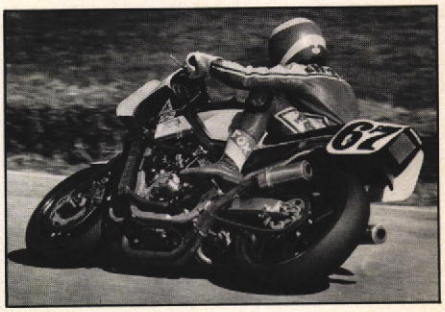
But in the end, it was Fast Eddie's riding that made the difference. As early as Tuesday's first practice session, he established

Continued

Clash of the titans; Mike Baldwin (1F) and Freddie Merkel (1) duel for third

Meanwhile, Schwantz (34) cruised to second, Shobert (67) faded to 15th place.





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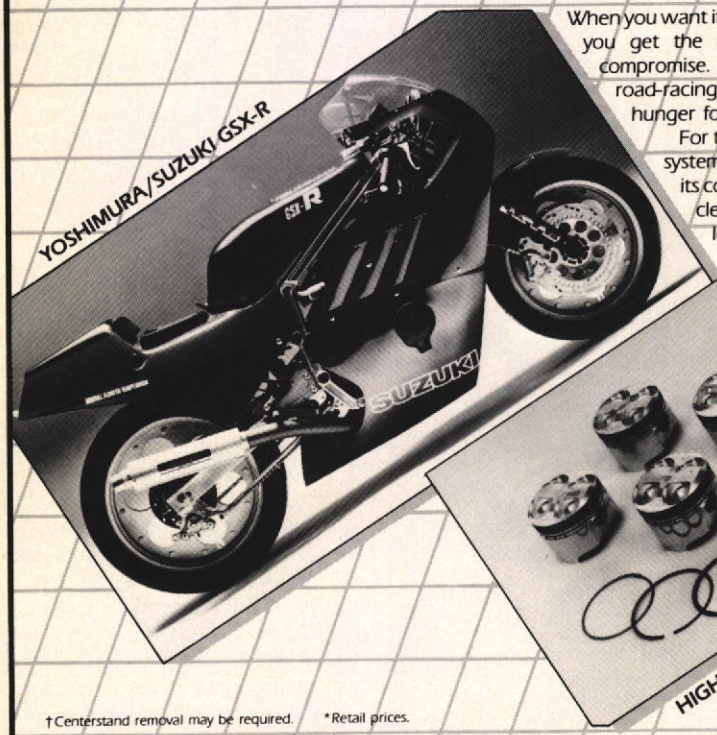

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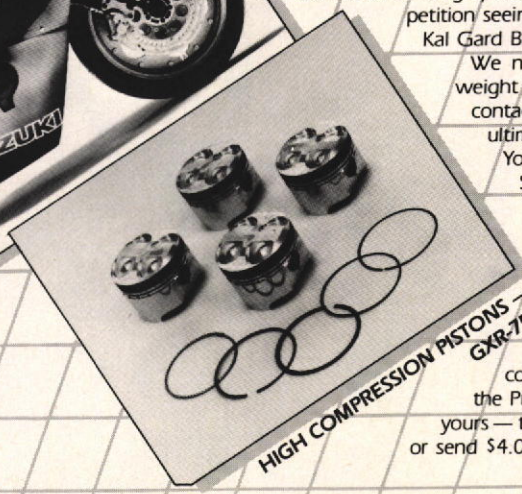

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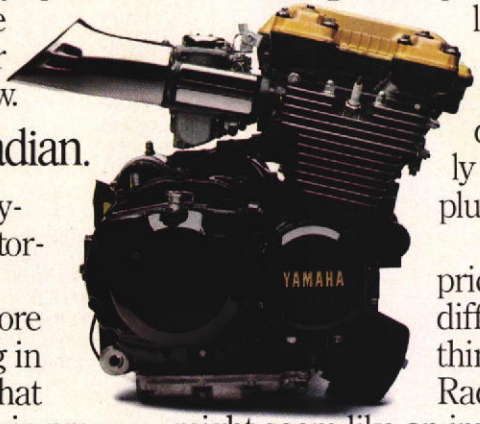

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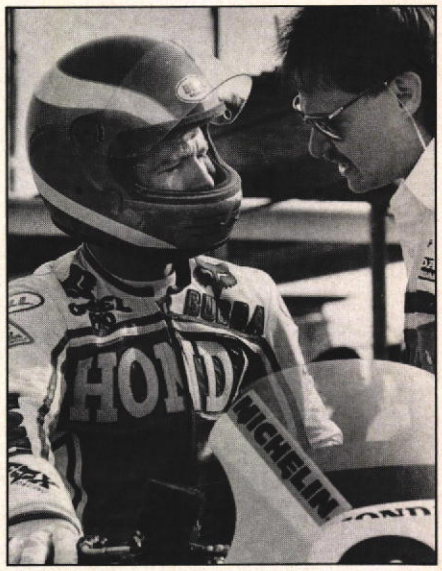

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Phil McDonald confers with Shobert

The GN Champ takes to the road.

Honda's pit stops were fast

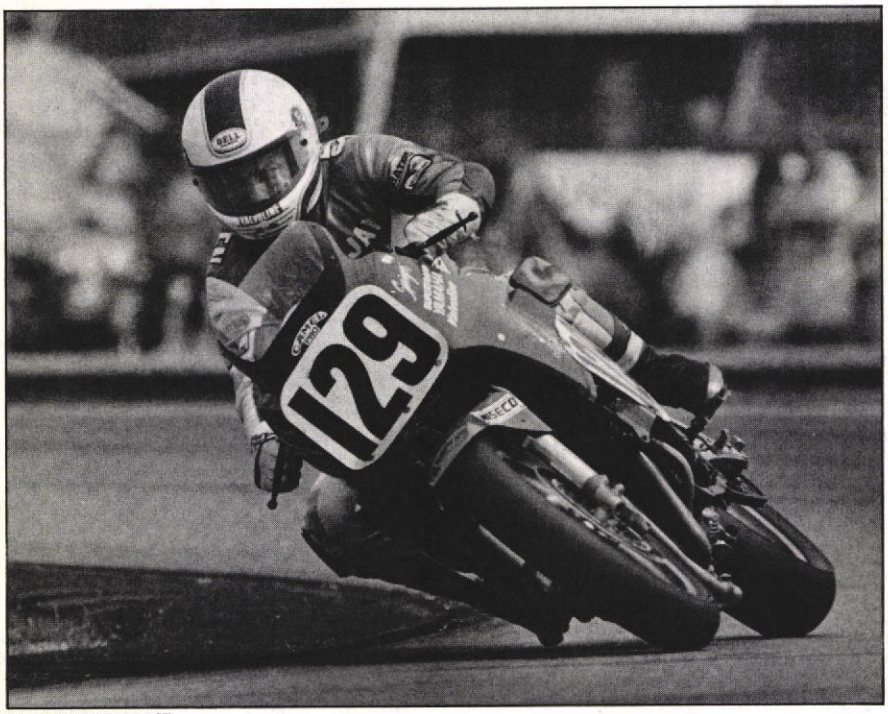
No time for self-service.

himself as the man to beat by passing the Yoshimura-Suzuki duo of Kevin Schwantz and Japan's Formula 1 Champion, Satoshi Tsujimoto, entering the East Banking. For three laps, the Yamaha steadily pulled away from the Suzukis. The next day, the Yosh team tried a different pipe on Schwantz's bike, cutting two seconds off his time, but it was still not enough to close the gap.

A 50-mile parade led by Lawson during the first qualifying heat race on Friday afternoon confirmed what people already suspected, too: He was the man to bet on for the 200, come Sunday. Filice's second-place finish ahead of Kork Ballington's Skoal-Bandit GSX-R750 illustrated the Yamaha's speed advantage even further.

Wayne Rainey led Honda-mate Merkel to a one-two in the second 50-miler, and the stage was set for the inevitable showdown on Sunday: Honda vs. Yamaha, Rainey vs.

Superteam's Main Spring



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• With all due respect to winner Eddie Lawson, Jay Springsteen's fifth-place finish is the Cinderella story of Daytona this year. Daytona was the former AMA Grand National Champion's first roadrace since winning the Battle of the Twins aboard an XR1000 at the Superspeedway in 1983. This year he rode a Yamaha FZ750 for Tom Tucker's Superteam.

Springsteen rode the 3.56-mile course with confidence, if not style. Rather than hang off the bike through corners, like current roadracers do, the flattrack artist adopted the unorthodox, yet effective stuff-it-in-and-ride-it-out style of team manager, Gary Nixon.

Indeed, Nixon rubbed enough of his roadrace moxie on Springsteen that he finished fourth in his 50-mile heat, one position ahead of another flattrack great, current No. 1, Bubba Shobert.

But the Nixon/Superteam/Springsteen relationship is defunct for the remainder of the year. Springsteen is bound by his Harley-Davidson contract, and he will compete in dirt races only. But for one afternoon this year, people got to see what a flattrack specialist can do on pavement. And he flat did all right.

—Dain Gingerelli

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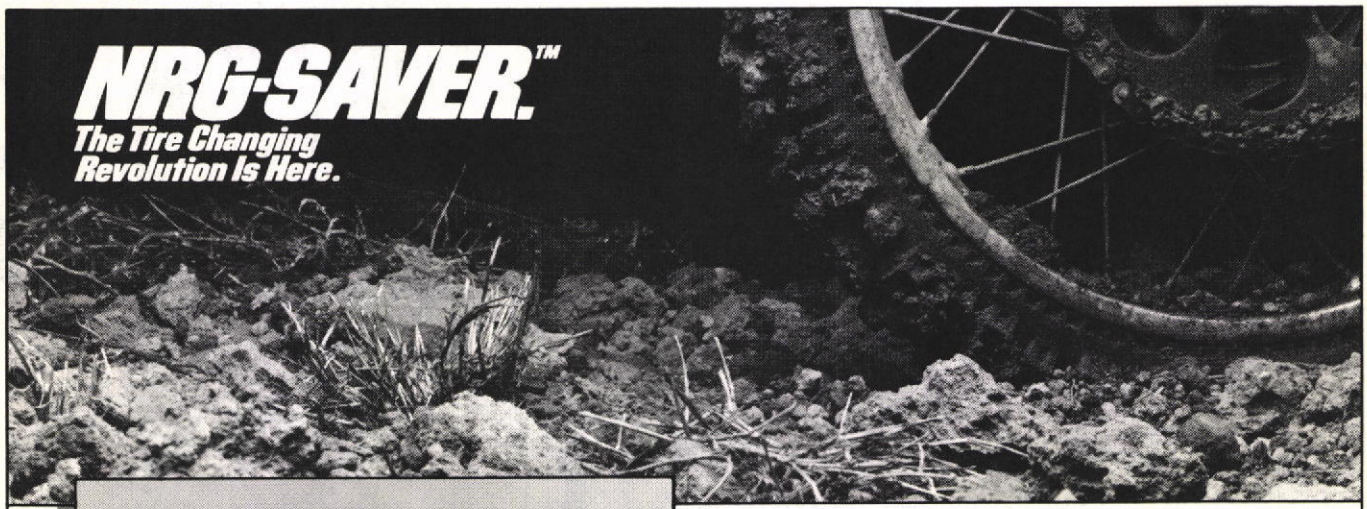

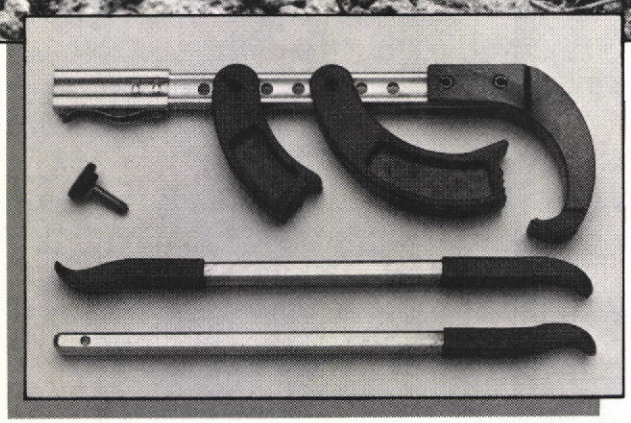

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Baldwin adapted well to the FZ750

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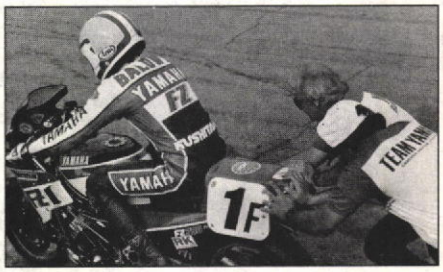


Baldwin gets a push before practice

His FZ ran out of push on lap 39.

Filice's pit stops were like clockwork

But time expired for his FZ engine.

Lawson. Nobody was surprised, either, when the pair broke away from the rest of the pack on Sunday, swapping positions while Schwantz rode brilliantly in their shadows, waiting for them to break.

The first sign of trouble came on lap 15, when Rainey crept into the pits. His rear Michelin, the same type tire that Lawson had on his FZ, had lost a chunk "the size of your shoe," according to Honda mechanic Sparky Edmunston. Lawson was free, leaving Schwantz to battle his teammate, Tsujimoto, while Baldwin and Merkel disputed fourth. The verdicts favored Schwantz and Merkel in both cases; Tsujimoto's engine broke, while Baldin's FZ began misfiring, a fate similar to what he experienced in the 50-miler on Friday. Both DNF, and the top-three finishing order was Yamaha, Suzuki, Honda.

That's Show Biz

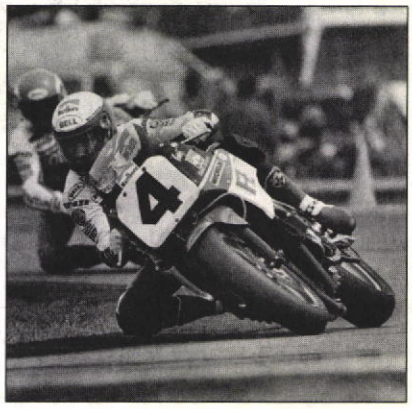
• Daytona's speed-reducing Chicane was spliced into the Speedway's backstraight six years ago, as a safety measure. The bikes were maintaining top speed all the way from the East Banking to the Start/Finish, and the long high-speed section overheated the tires. A serious accident, similar to Barry Sheene's 175-mph crash in 1974, was considered imminent. A slight kink in the straight proved the best way to slow down the field and increase track safety.

Now it's time the race organizers *take out* a few chicanes for the same reason—track safety. In this case, though, the subject is mobile chicanes—the field-fillers, riders who are part of the 80-bike show, but not part of the race. Many of the faster riders, including race-winner Eddie Lawson, figure a slow rider one day is going to cause a major accident. More than once Lawson, who lapped the course at under two minutes throughout the 200, had to alter his lines through turns to avoid slower—or worse, unpredictable—riders.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 DAVID DEWHURST

"Slower rides are a *big* problem," Lawson said after his win. "That's one of my big concerns, being taken out by a slow rider."

One remedy, Lawson suggests, is to limit the field to 60 riders. "The last 20 riders are just too slow," he said. Unfortunately, the Daytona promoters, who determine the number of bikes in the race, don't want to change. "We want to keep the traditional 80-bike format," Jim France, vice president of the Speedway, said. France claims that an 80-bike field makes for an interesting show, because there is always a racebike moving in front of the spectators. Also, the race's 200-mile length means the attrition rate is high; an 80-bike field lowers the odds of having too few bikes running at the finish for a good show.



Those arguments might be valid if the Daytona 200 were a show only. But it's not. The 200 is a race, and it should be run with that in mind, because one day, somebody will get seriously injured in a tangle with a slow rider. And when that happens, it won't be a matter of what it will take to change the race, but *who* the race has taken. —*Dain Gingerelli*

Continued

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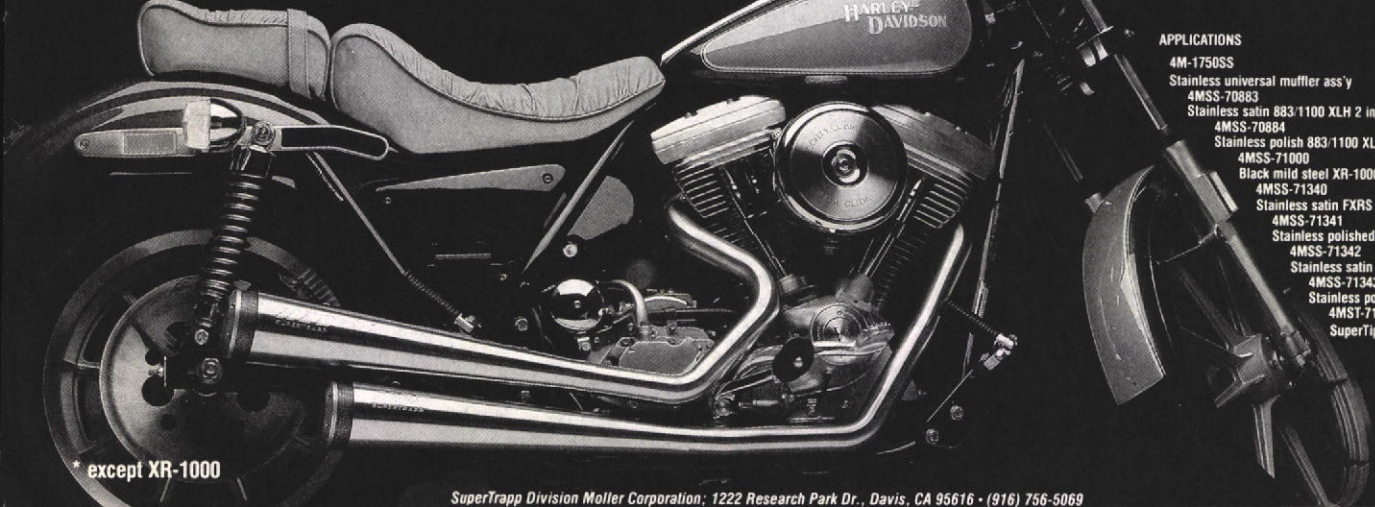

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Japan's Formula 1 champ, Tsujimoto

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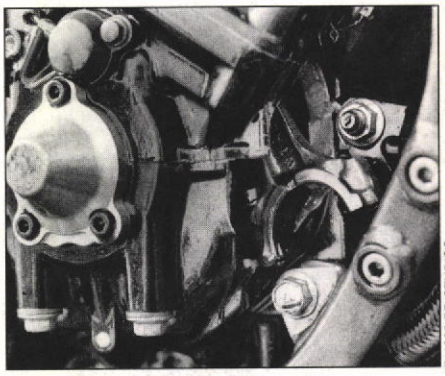

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Filice's engine after the 200

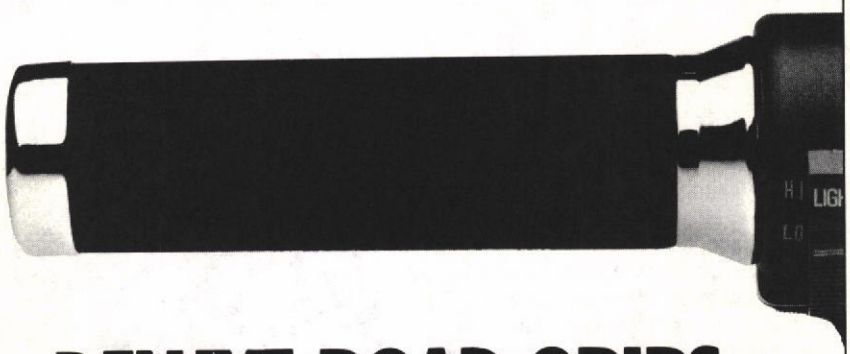
The connecting rod takes a breather.

Lawson and Merkel after the 200

Letting the wine breathe.

But the race, and the week, belonged to Lawson. He was never challenged—except during the first 15 laps of the race with Rainey—by any other rider. Furthermore, he never encountered trouble throughout the week or race. He skirted misfortune on all fronts, too: Baldwin's FZ spun a rod bearing, while Filice's engine blew on the backstraight with two laps remaining, and Rainey had to settle for fourth place thanks to recurring tire trouble. Through it all, Lawson just chugged to victory, his first at Daytona in either the 200 or Superbike. In fact, Lawson was in such control that when he was told his final race lap times were 1:59s and 2:00s, he said it felt slow, "like I was stopped."

Unfortunately for the rest of the 80-bike field, Lawson didn't stop. The day and the 1986 Daytona Arai Superbike 200 belonged to him. Even with Spencer on the grid, Lawson would have been hard to beat, and that's exactly how he wants to keep things the remainder of the year in Europe, too. ●



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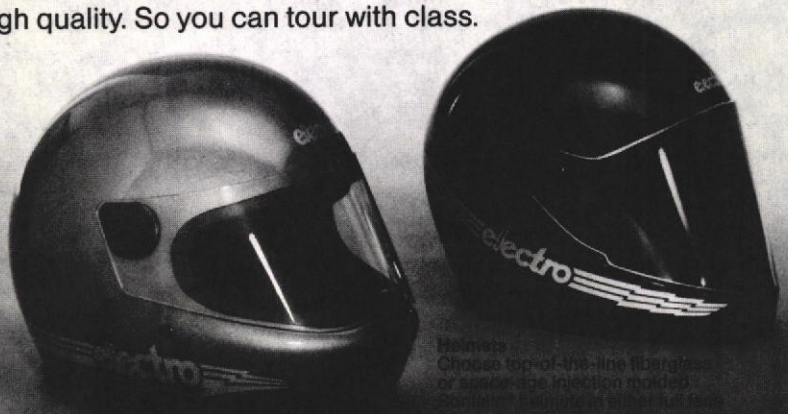

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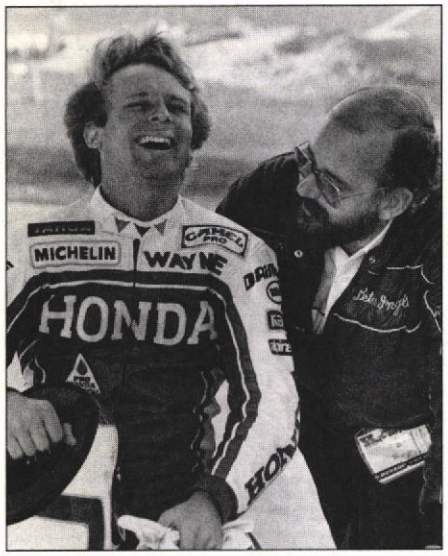

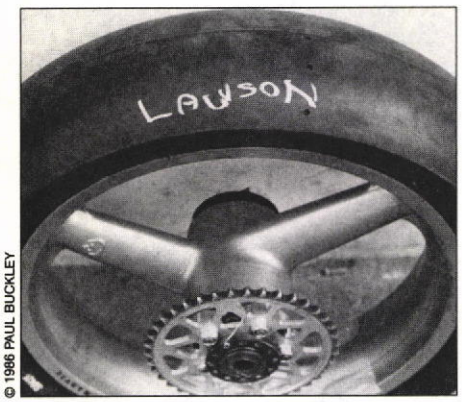

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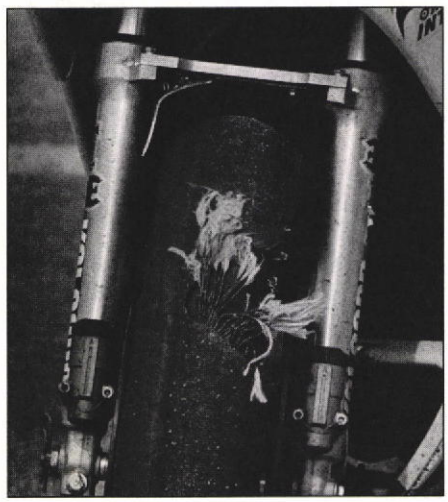

Don't tread on me: Everybody in this year's race was concerned about tire wear. Dunlop's Peter Ingley enjoys a laugh with Wayne Rainey, whose Michelin's didn't stand up to the Honda Interceptor's high speeds. Lawson's Michelins went the distance, though; a privateer's (bottom) front tire didn't.

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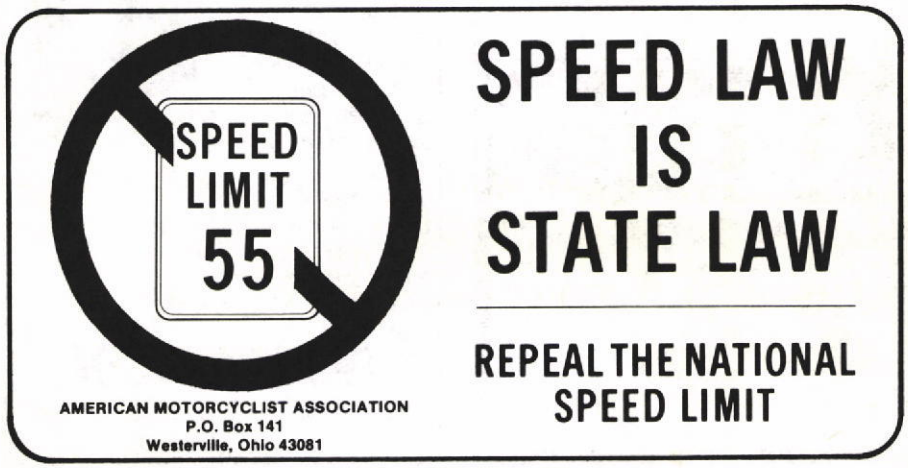

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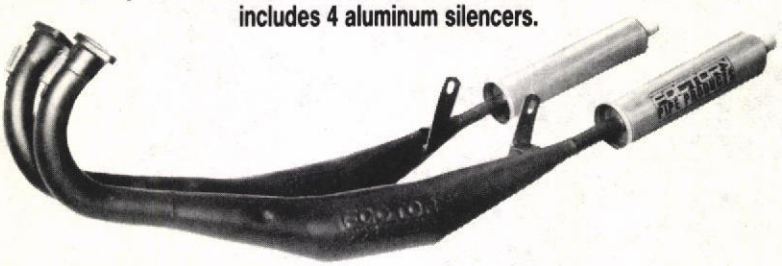

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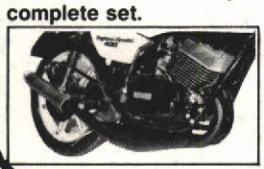

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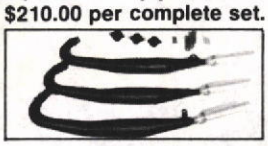

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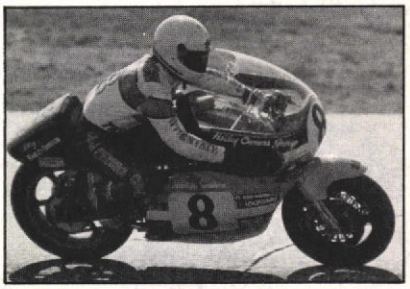

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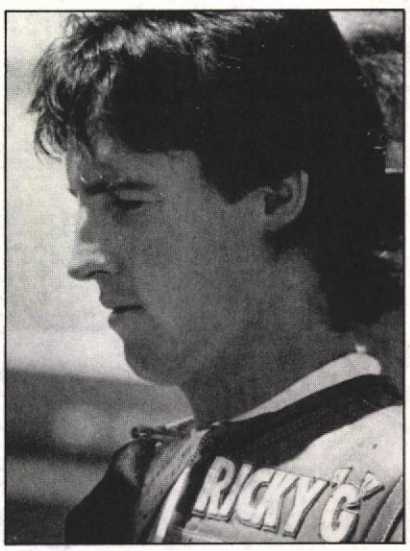
Gene Church, wants his MTV

Racing for money, chicks for free.

• MTV: That's *motorcycle* television, thanks in part to the AMA and Seals Communications, producers of USA Network's "Motoworld." AMA and Seals Com will send out same-day satellite news feeds of the 10 Camel Pro Series roadraces this year to television stations throughout America. Film at 11.

• Bubba's bullet: AMA Grand National No. 1, Bubba Shobert, is going roadracing this year. Shobert bought a new Honda RS250R, and intends to compete in Formula 2 races that don't conflict with his flattrack schedule. "I want to get some roadrace experience," he said. It makes you wonder if the 24-year-old Texan is hoarding ammunition, hoping to take aim on a world championship bid in the future.



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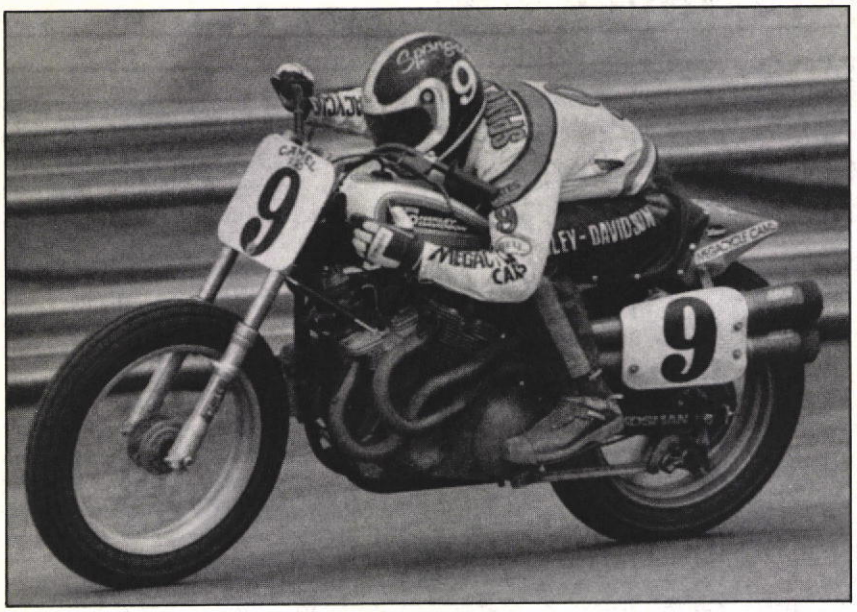
100MPH Club member, Ricky Graham

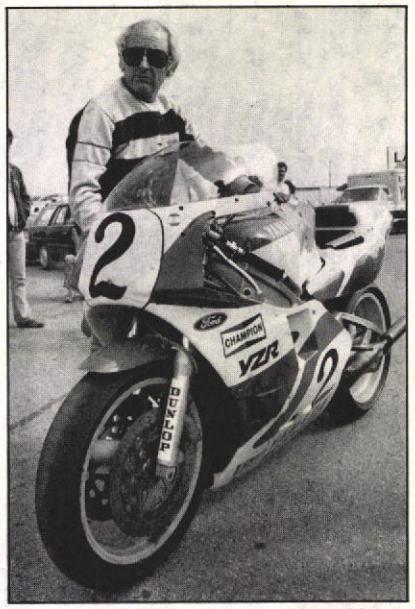
Reviewing this year's roster.

• 100 MPH Club: There's a new fraternity in the Camel Pro Series, open to Mile riders only. It's the 100 MPH Club, and as the name implies membership to this elite group is for those riders who've lapped a Camel Pro Mile at more than 100 mph. By covering the DuQuoin Mile at 100.956 mph in 1980, Hank Scott became the organization's first pledge. Membership



Jay Springsteen slides in for 100MPH Club roll call

His circle of friends includes the fastest CPS Mile racers.



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Ex-champs: Kel Carruthers and KR's OW

An ex-Champion-sponsored bike.

has since grown to 34 riders. Ricky Graham holds the fastest time, circulating the Springfield Mile at 104.203 mph.

• Ex-Champion: The Champion Spark Plug Co. announced its withdrawal from motorcycle competition last spring. Champion had been the perennial sponsor of the Laguna Seca National and had supported several top-name riders, including Kenny Roberts. Champion also indicated that it was dropping its motorcycle product line, too. The Laguna race is still scheduled for July 13, and rumors indicate Nissan Motors will sponsor it.

• Evel doings: The name Knievel is popping up again. This time it's Robbie, 23-year-old son of famed motorcycle jumper and fast-talking showman, Evel Knievel.

Continued

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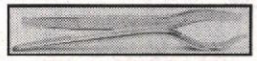

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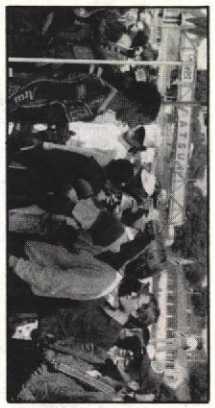
Pit Bits

The younger Knievel is jumping his way to fame and glory, much like his father did a decade ago, but with a difference: Robbie has only one broken bone from his vehicle-vaulting antics, while Pappa K is reputed to have 433 mis-alignments in his banged and battered body. The '80s-vintage Knievel wears the same flamboyant style of leathers his father donned but rides a Honda CR250R, rather than a Harley-Davidson XR750 like the senior jumper did.

• Radial RS: Daytona Formula 2 winner, Tony Mang, used Dunlop radial tires on his Honda RS250R. According to Dunlop's Peter Ingley, the new radial design is "working good." Obviously, since Mang lapped everybody up to the fourth-place finisher in the race.

• Tire Wars: While radial tires are becoming more plentiful in formula racing, don't expect the Superbikes to get them for a while. One spokesman for Michelin indicated that the firm is withholding radials for Superbikes, because Michelin doesn't have a street-legal radial, and so there would be little marketing value for a race win.



Typical Camel Pro fans with Baldwin

Just a bunch of average Joes.

• Spectator spectating: The AMA's monthly magazine, American Motorcyclist, recently completed a survey of its readers. According to the association, the conclusions also reflect the basic demographics of AMA race fans. And the survey said: The average age of readers (fans) is 36.7 years, of which 96 percent are males. More than two-thirds own their own homes, and 40 percent travel between 51 and 150 miles to motorcycle events. The average income per AMA-member household is $34,306. A separate race-fan survey is scheduled for this year.

• Quote Department: Eddie Lawson is considered a quiet man; he states his case without fanfare, then shuts up. When a European reporter pointed out that Lawson's Daytona 200 win was worth more than any Grand Prix victory, Lawson said it didn't make any difference to him. GP racing was still more important. "Why?" the reporter asked. Lawson didn't say a word, he just pointed to the Marlboro patch on the left shoulder of his leathers and smiled.

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Winners & Losers

Premature Indication

The checkered flag comes one lap too soon for Donnie Greene.

• Hall of Fame baseball player Yogi Berra gave sports a colorful, if not popular, quote. He said about baseball games in particular, and sports in general, "It ain't over 'til it's over."

But for defending AMA Formula 2 champion, Donnie Greene, Daytona's F2 race was over one lap too soon. As events turned out, Greene had been dicing nearly the entire 100-mile race with West German rider Harald Eckl for third place. Anton Mang (West Germany) and Sito Pons (Spain) had established the first two positions, and so when the white flag was put out for the final lap, all eyes turned to the Greene/Eckl duel to see who would control third place at the finish. All eyes, except the flagman's, were busily searching the West Banking for Mang's Rothmans Honda, due at about the same time as Greene & Co.

In fact, Mang was only six seconds behind the third place dice, and so when

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Donnie Greene spent most of the Daytona F2 race dicing with Harald Eckl

But for Greene and Eckl, the race was over before it was over.

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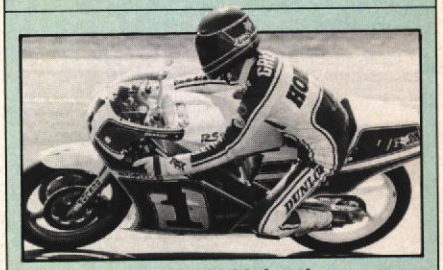


Greene was credited with fourth

And he sent forth a verbal volley.

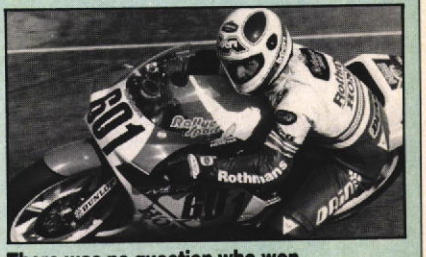
Greene and Eckl approached start/finish at about 150 mph, it was understandable that the starter might confuse Greene's red-white-and-blue Honda for Mang's blue-and-white Rothmans machine. And so the checkered, rather than the white flag was waved at Greene and Eckl. Greene, thinking the race was over, sat up, resigning himself to a fourth-place finish. Eckl completed the lap and was awarded third.

Greene pulled into the pits and immediately blasted the race officials, who by now realized their mistake. But they stood by their actions, and posted Greene as fourth.

"I'm mad, yeah," Greene said after the race. "It was a stupid mistake, and I'm going to file a protest." Greene's contention was that he could have slingshot past Eckl on the final lap—a common Daytona maneuver—for third place had he known when he was going to get the checkered flag.

Later, though, the AMA resolved the situation with a written apology issued to Greene and Eckl by AMA vice president of competition, Bill Amick. "On behalf of the American Motorcyclist Association," the statement read, "I would like to formally apologize to Mr. Eckl and Mr. Greene for any confusion this error may have caused them."

Justice wasn't exactly served, since Greene was credited with fourth place. But at least he got the satisfaction of knowing that the AMA acknowledged the error. The race was over, even by Yogi Berra's reckoning. ●



There was no question who won

Anton Mang walked away from field.

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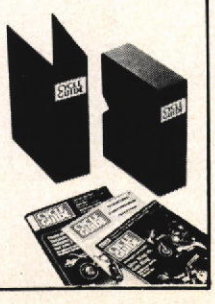

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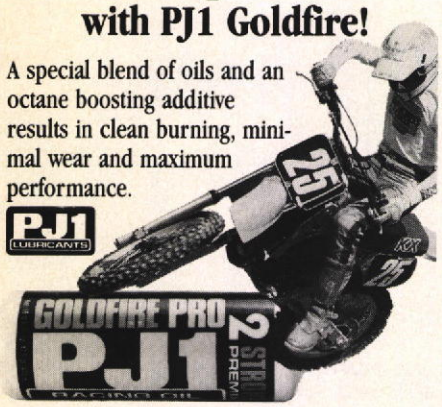

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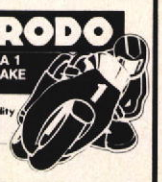

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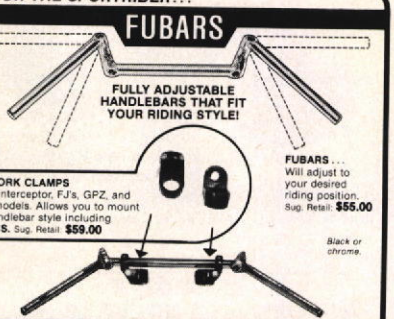
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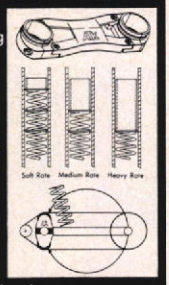

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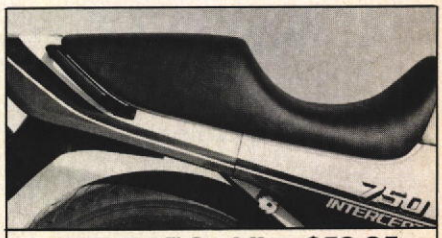

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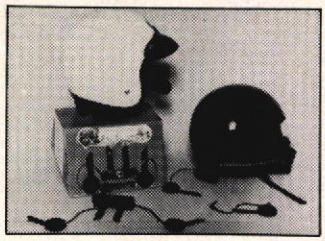

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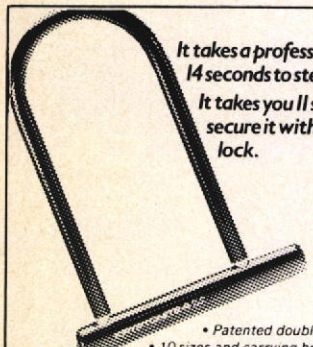

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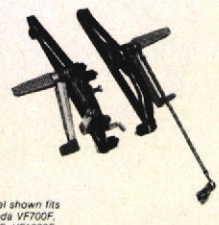

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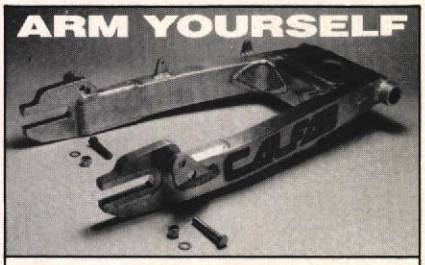

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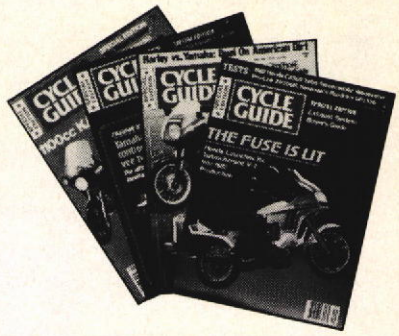

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Setting It Right

Keep The Wheels Turning

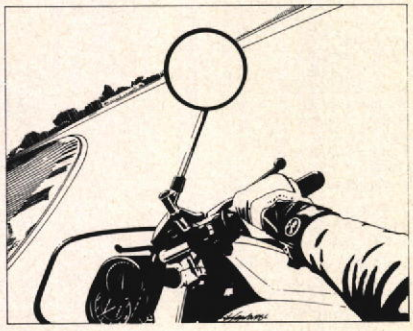
Because there's more to it than simply stopping the wheels.

• Love, they say, laughs at locksmiths. Lovers, it should follow, smile with anti-locksmiths. Certainly lovers of motorcycling should, if any were forthcoming; but nobody seems yet to have been successful in making anti-lock provisions for motorcycles. Brake-lock, I mean; protection against thievery is largely a matter of avoiding the company of knaves, but protection against the disasters of overbraking on a slippery surface is something that cannot be altogether guaranteed even if one's own riding is in no way roguish.

There is no earthbound vehicle that needs anti-lock braking more than does the motorcycle. The fact that those provisions are available on many cars, but on no motorcycles, is largely a measure of how much more reluctant motorcyclists are than car drivers to pay high prices for sensible safeguards. It is also, to be fair, a measure of how much more difficult it is to do the job well on a motorcycle.

Driving the latest European Ford Escort is what prompts the subject. For a decade, the likes of BMW and Mercedes-Benz have offered lockproof brakes on their most costly cars as very expensive options, and Honda has for some years done the same for its cars at much more modest cost. It is only with these new small Fords that the option has been available at bargain prices. They undoubtedly represent the thin end of the wedge: Within a few years, such systems will be incorporated as a matter of course in the majority of cars, and quite rightly.

Driving on the snow-packed roads of Finland and on Girling's split-mu test tracks in England has shown me what wonders anti-lock brakes can do. To apply the brakes as hard and sharply as one can is normally asking for trouble, even in a straight line on a dry road. To do so while making an emergency lane change on soaking wet tarmac, or when driving extravagantly fast on snow and ice, and to be able to maintain steering ability while stopping smartly, feels so amazing and so dismissive of experience as to be almost choking. After a moment of stupefaction and one more of reflection, it becomes blindingly obvious that this is one of the greatest contributions to road safety and high-performance road usage since the halogen headlight.



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It is ironic that when halogen lights were new and all the rage, more than 20 years ago, anti-lock brakes were also in the offing. Designs suitable for motorcycles were being eagerly discussed before the Jensen FF made the notion a reality for production cars. After all that time, during which halogen lamps very rapidly became the norm in Europe, anti-lock brakes are just about to be as common for cars. Not for motorcycles, though; and this is so lamentable that it almost makes me angry, seeing that the Ford system is one that was originally designed for bikes.

The system is light, simple, purely mechanical (needing no elaborate electronics), and it is quite cheap. Why, then, is it a catalogued option for little economy cars, and not yet a status symbol for the most technology-flaunting of motorcycles?

Because, as I was saying earlier, bikes present more problems. The Girling system was in the first place (in 1979) invented for motorcycles, but initial progress was slow until a year later, when it was applied to cars. The Girling engineers' learning curve then rose sharply.

It is so much easier to test up to and beyond the limits of adhesion in a car: The thing just slides or spins, and then the driver gets it going again and turns back up the test track to repeat it all again. It is nothing to get worked up about, not at all; but even the calmest of professional bike testers grows a trifle agitated when he is asked to risk a high-speed slide again and again. Outriggers are only satisfactory topple catchers when the degree of banking is limited; when the tilting is taken steeper, the skis become sprags, and a fall becomes a flip. It is bad for you, that sort of thing, especially on a daily basis.

In addition to the riders' problems, the motorcycle created its own. Steering in a bend while braking heavily, for instance, is complicated by the increasingly evident propensity of modern bikes to twitch upright when the brakes are applied sharply. The wider and lower the tire profile, the more marked does this behavior appear, evidently induced by migration of the tire's center of effort from the center line: Brake torque creates a couple which turns the steering into the corner and picks the bike up straight again. The effect of the anti-lock creating and canceling this action five times a second (releasing and reclamping the disk can be as rapid as that when the surface is tricky) needs some watching.

Then there is the matter of low speed, when a car system is normally bypassed to ensure a satisfactory final stage to the stopping. Below about 5 mph, an automobile's brakes usually work better if uninterrupted—but a motorcycle can be made to fall by a locked front wheel at speeds lower than that, so the system has to funtion right down to zero mph.

Just imagine some mud-plugger easing his bike down a very steep and greasy hill, defying established techniques and using his lovely new anti-lock front brake. That thing has only to misbehave at 1 mph to bring the whole lot down; and in the United States, there would soon be lawyers bringing a whole lot of grotesque product-liability principles down around the ears of the poor manufacturers.

Because of the monstrously inequitable state of such laws, American Ford Escorts will not be blessed with this wonderful safety device. Presumably motorcycles will not fare much better, while in Europe they step forward next year with anti-lock systems promised for BMW at least and others with less immediate certainty. Although the Girling device is in use on British police BMWs for assessment, BMW itself will be using a Kugelfischer system. Indeed, European lawmakers are even talking of making similar provisions mandatory for all motorcycles in as little as three years from now—but that smacks of an attempted commercial lockout of the sort at which the Japanese love to laugh.

—L.J.K. Setright

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